



Journey to a Different Place

The integration of improvisation in the works of Maria Schneider

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Introduction

Imagine a big band composition without the kicks of the brass or the energetic emphasis on the swing groove. Imagine a form where themes and motives are being developed in an environment consisting of sheets of color delicately woven together like a piece written for a symphony orchestra. Imagine the surge of complex rhythms making you want to dance, only you struggle with it because you cannot seem to find the meter.

This is the award-winning music of Maria Schneider, one of today's most celebrated jazz composers. She is known for her ability to draw almost every color imaginable from her orchestra and for having a sense of form that is only equal to a handful of composers and arrangers of jazz ensemble music. In addition the Maria Schneider Orchestra (MSO) is considered one of the most stable big band configurations since the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and much of the loyalty found in that orchestra is not only based on Schneider as a person, but also has a great deal to do with the way she writes her music and the philosophy that lies behind the compositional and musical process as a whole.

Ever since I first heard Maria Schneider's music, I have been fascinated by it. At first it was all about the *sound* of the music. It was so very different from any kind of big band music I had ever heard before. The familiar use of accents in the horns was missing, the sizzling sound of the trumpets that I usually like so much was rarely present, and as mentioned earlier, the swing groove, a feature that many consider *the* defining element of jazz, was hardly used at all. After having dwelt more on her pieces and peeled off the outer layers, however, I also became aware of the structure of her work.

I often find that listening to Maria Schneider's music is like walking through a succession of rooms, being constantly surprised at what they reveal at the same time as you slowly come to realize how they are all somehow connected. The purple on the walls in the living room is found in the accenting pillows and curtains in the library. The tiny gold handles on the many doors are found in all of the rooms throughout the building. At some point you run into a person who is more than familiar with the house who begins telling you stories as he is leading you from one room to another, feeding off on the details present in each and every one of them, adjusting his voice to the atmosphere in the space you are in.

What I am trying to describe to you, is a kind of structure that is different from many jazz orchestra compositions; a through composed structure where contrasting sections organically emerge as the piece develops, and a structure that perhaps better than anything else is able to balance the flux between a composer's vision and the musicians' creative skills.

In the end [...] to me it's not about the music. It's about how well the music becomes the conduit for something else. To the listener, it almost doesn't matter what the music is, it's that the music feels like an experience (Schneider 2011a).

Every piece Schneider has written seeks to convey a story or a certain kind of feeling. Most of her compositions are through composed, and many bear much resemblance to that which within the classical tradition would be called program music. *Wyrgly* (Evanescence 1994), *The Pretty Road* (Sky Blue 2007) and *Hang Gliding* (Allegresse 2000) are examples of this, depicting a monster, Schneider's home town and her experience of hang gliding respectively.

There is no doubt that Schneider's classical training comes into use in her composing. This becomes apparent both in the orchestration of her works and in their form. By composing the way Schneider does, creating entirely new harmonic progressions for the solo sections and developing thematic material, creates a music that is very different from most traditional big band music. In fact, writing extensively about form, is rarely done in jazz, perhaps mainly due to much big band music having a standardized form scheme. Jazz arrangements have tended to have a shape resembling that of *theme and variations*, a *head-solo-head structure*. Thomas Owens refers to these forms as *fixed-harmony variations*:

The commonest structure consists of a theme (that is, a harmonized melody, or in some cases [...] simply a series of harmonies, having its own formal design), followed without pause by a succession of improvised variations based on the harmonies of the theme, and then by a repetition of the theme itself. In many instances the chord progression is the single most significant formal element, and the one that defines and distinguishes the piece (Owens 2011).

The theme, or head, spoken of above, is typically that of a 32 bar *Tin Pan Alley* song or some version of the blues. Schneider, on the other hand, composes melodic material that often is based on two or three different thematic or motivic ideas.

In addition to pairing a strong sense of form with a very clear vision of what the compositions should convey, Schneider decides to add an element of substantial risk. All of her compositions contain long stretches of improvisation, often amounting to over a third of each and every piece. She wants her

music to feel collaborative, [...] that they`re experiencing something as a soloist, unique when they play [her] music because [she] write[s] intricately with something for them to respond to and react to (Schneider 2011a).

She emphasizes how she loves this factor of the unknown. This is the reason why she writes improvised music in the first place (Schneider 2011a).

Among all the things I could have chosen to explore in the music of Maria Schneider, this became my main focus of interest; her ability to balance the relationship between improvisation and written composition and making the solo section integrated in such a way that the improvisation never becomes an isolated island in the middle of the piece showing some musician's abilities off, but a section where everything moves forward towards some point in the distance, a section where themes are being developed and create coherence between the different sections of the piece.

This thesis is not so much about improvisation in itself, as it is about how Schneider accommodates for it, how she uses compositional tools to create an environment that spurs off the creativity of the soloist at the same time as it creates internal coherence in that which is written. Based on the above I arrived at the following thesis statement, or rather thesis question:

How does Maria Schneider incorporate improvisation into the larger structures of her work?

In order to answer this question, I have decided to divide the thesis into seven chapters, and to rely mainly on three selected works for reference both during the analysis and the theoretical chapters of the thesis. Below I will give a short introduction to the layout of the thesis before venturing into presenting the three pieces I have chosen as the basis for my analysis.

The six chapters of this thesis is divided into three parts; a theoretical part, an analytical part and, finally, the conclusion. The theoretical part of the thesis will be covered in chapter 1 and chapter 2. In addition to this introduction, chapter 1 will give an overview of the life and music of Maria Schneider and her orchestra in addition to a presentation of Schneider's major influences while chapter 2 considers some of the analytical challenges this thesis is faced with as well as the thoughts behind the choice of methods. Chapter 2 also contains some practical information such as a presentation of the LIF-model (*Level of Individual Freedom*, see pp. 33).

The analytical part of my thesis consists of four chapters structured around the LIF-model. I have divided the jazz orchestra into three parts based on the different levels of individual freedom each player has at any given moment in time, or to put it in another way, based on the amount of influence Schneider can exercise. Chapter 3 revolves around the horns¹ who mostly play on LIF 1 (they play the music as it is written), focusing on how Schneider creates inner coherence through the reuse of previously presented material. This will by far be the longest chapter. Chapter 4 continues focusing on the horns, but this time the topic of discussion is how orchestration is used both to create variation and to guide the soloist through his improvisation.

Chapter 5 will present the readers to the rhythm section of the jazz orchestra. This is perhaps the element in the composition provided with the most complexity when it comes to the amount of freedom each player gets. They operate mainly on LIFs 1, 2 and 3. I have chosen to structure this chapter around these levels giving examples of how Schneider takes advantage of the rhythm section in addition to giving them a certain amount of freedom.

Chapter 6 is in many ways a chapter that pulls everything together. This is where the role of the soloist is being taken into the consideration. This is where the roles are reversed between the composer and the musician when it comes to the amount of individual freedom. This chapter aims to portray how the soloist can take advantage of the information that is provided to him. It is a chapter that aims to demonstrate how the tools presented in chapter 3 and 4 guides the soloist to the place where Schneider wants the piece to go in addition to opening up for an element of surprise. It demonstrates how a well-written composition can create internal coherence in the composition as well as allowing the soloist the freedom she needs to feel inspired. After this, I will provide the reader with a short conclusion.

This thesis does by no means seek to present the reader with an exhaustive analysis of Schneider's compositions. That has been done before. The pieces used serve to shed light upon some of Schneider's compositional techniques rather than being the object of analysis for its own sake. Since I am very interested in jazz composing and arranging in general, I wanted to be able to draw certain conclusions from the analysis that could be used in other musical contexts, and I hope that an interested reader can find something useful in that sense as well.

¹ In jazz, "the horns" refers to all the wind instruments in the large jazz ensemble, i.e. everybody except the rhythm section.

My first inclination when deciding how to approach the subject mentioned earlier was to give many smaller examples from different works of Schneider's. However, I quickly realized that providing the reader with all of these examples taken from a plethora of compositions could quickly become confusing and would involve several organizational challenges. Due to the fact that I could achieve roughly the same goals merely by using a handful of pieces, I have found that this would be the better approach. The compositions I have decided to focus on are: *Choro Dançado* (*Concert in the Garden* 2004), *The Pretty Road* (*Sky Blue* 2007), and *Wyrgly* (*Evanescence* 1994).

Choro Dançado is the first of *Three Romances* issued by Schneider on the recording *Concert in the Garden* (2004). The *choro* is an old form of Brazilian instrumental music known for its light character, many modulations and the frequent use of counterpoint (Schneider 2006c). Schneider's piece is not meant to be authentic choro music, but is inspired by its stylistic features. In fact, the title in itself is a bit of a paradox considering that *choro* music is not dance music at all (Schneider 2006c). The reason why I chose this piece is that almost everything that happens in the piece, every single musical enhancement (see chapter 1.3.2, p. 15), is based on the ideas presented in the melody introduction of the composition. In addition it is an excellent example of how Schneider applies different orchestration techniques to create dynamic development and guide the soloists to where she wants them to go. The way Schneider chooses to structure the solo sections is also an element of great interest that will be dealt with in chapter 3.

The Pretty Road was chosen as an object for analysis for a number of reasons. It is a very beautiful piece with a light, crispy, almost pop-like sound to it. The piece is an appropriate example of Schneider bringing the listener from one contrasting place to another by using a solo section at the same time as it has an apparent simplicity that fascinates me. The few, but effective composing tools Schneider applies in this context are good examples of how to think economically when composing, and a contrast to the lush textures of *Choro Dançado*. What is of great interest is how Schneider guides the improviser and the internal dynamics of the rhythm section by using shifts in harmonic rhythm and modulation. This, hence, becomes yet another example of how Schneider uses musical enhancements to create coherence within her piece.

Wyrgly is in many ways closer to a traditional big band arrangement than *The Pretty Road*, both structurally and rhythmically. It was released on the *Evanescence* album (1994) and is an

example of some of her earlier work. The solo sections are based on harmonic progressions presented in the melodic presentation and the shuffle or “boogie-woogie” style is applied in larger sections of the piece. This latter trait is something that rarely occurs in Schneider’s music. The piece mixes these traditional elements with more untraditional elements such as sections of open harmonic language and tone row-based composition techniques—an interesting combination.

The solo sections in this piece not only consist of multiple soloists. Techniques applied to create forward motion and dynamics are quite different from those of *The Pretty Road*. Apart from the above, this piece was mainly chosen due to the amount of freedom given to some of the players and especially considering the open harmonic language used. Like *The Pretty Road*, this is a programmatic piece depicting a monster called Wyrgly. It is much rougher in character than any of the two pieces mentioned above, and is partly chosen for the thesis due to this contrast. The solo sections among other things, involves an el-guitar solo that creates a type of sound that is quite different to her later work.

Before introducing chapter 1, I would like to encourage you to read this thesis while listening to the music described above in addition to consulting the score in order to gain the fullest understanding possible. The text is well-provided with music examples, but these are taken out of a context that can only be grasped fully by listening to the music described in addition to consulting a score. Both music and scores can be obtained at Maria Schneider’s home page on artistshare.com.

1 Contexts

1.1 The Life and Music of Maria Schneider

It all began for me at the age of five, when Evelyn Butler, a dynamic, redheaded classical and stride pianist, blew into my hometown from Chicago [...]. Over the next thirteen years, she whetted my curiosity for how music works by teaching me classical and jazz theory from lesson one (Schneider 2006a).

This is how Maria Schneider, born on the 27 November 1960 in Windom, Minnesota, begins the account of her own life. After having been given an introduction to the world of music, that in addition to learning to play the piano, included playing the violin and the clarinet, she went on to study theory and composition at the University of Minnesota. After receiving her Bachelor of Music, Schneider enrolled at the University of Miami, but transferred to the Eastman School of Music the following year (1984) where she earned a Master's Degree in jazz writing and contemporary media (Schneider 2006a)². Having completed her formal studies, Schneider moved to New York in 1985, and was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant that allowed her to study with Bob Brookmeyer. She later explained that “Bob's ingenuity, his ideas about minimizing materials and developing a sense of form, and the wonderful spirit and drama of his music” would open up a new world to her (Schneider 2006a).

Shortly after this, Schneider was given the opportunity to work as Gil Evans' assistant. She remained his employee until his death in 1988 after having among other things, acted as a ghost writer on the movie *The Color of Money* and on Sting's 1987 European Tour. This close relationship also resulted in her conducting the Gil Evans Orchestra at the 1993 Spoleto Music Festival and the 1996 JVC Jazz Festival in a concert consisting of selections from *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches of Spain* and *Quiet Nights* on the request of Anita Evans.

Through her connection with Bob Brookmeyer and his affiliation with Mel Lewis, Schneider wrote pieces for the Village Vanguard Orchestra before she took the next important step in her career, namely that of forming her own band. In 1989 she partnered up with her husband

² Unless specified, the biographical information is taken from the liner notes to Schneider's album *Evanescence* (Schneider 2006a) in addition to an introduction to an interview in *Evanescence. Complete Scores Maria Schneider Orchestra*, (Sturm 1998) and her own home page (Schneider 2006d)

at the time, trombonist and writer John Fedchock and started one. After three years they split and Maria Schneider created her own group with the old configuration of the band as an offshoot of the new.

The Maria Schneider Orchestra played every Monday at the Visiones in New York, from 1993 to 1998. Together they have recorded several albums: *Evanescence* (1994), *Coming About* (1996/2008), *Days of Wine and Roses—Live at the Jazz Standard* (2000), *Allegresse* (2000), *Concert in the Garden* (2004) and *Sky Blue* (2007). The *Concert in the Garden*-album won a Grammy for “Best Large Ensemble Recording”, whereas *Sky Blue*’s *Cerulean Skies* won a Grammy Award for “Best Instrumental Composition.” A substantial majority of the pieces recorded on these albums are Maria Schneider’s own compositions, and those that are not have still got her very recognizable stamp on them. Works by Maria Schneider has been commissioned on several occasions, one of them being by the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1995 where she presented the suite *Scenes from a Childhood*. This has resulted in her band touring both Europe and the Far East giving concerts and workshops (Kennedy 2012).

Schneider’s projects have not limited themselves to her own orchestra, however. In 1994 she wrote music for and conducted concerts with Toots Thielemans and the Nordbotten Big Band (Sweden) on commission. The collaboration between Schneider and Thielemans has continued and they have worked with a substantial amount of European orchestras. Another commission given to Schneider in 1994 was that of *El Viento*. The Spanish-inspired piece was performed at Carnegie Hall by the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra led by Schneider herself. The following two years Schneider and her orchestra gave televised performances at the opening of the 1995 Macau International Music Festival and the 1996 Berlin Jazz Festival. In 1998 she presented a new work at the American Dance Festival featuring dancers from the Pilobolus dance company (Kennedy 2012).

On several occasions Schneider has been asked the following question: When are you going to compose for the symphony orchestra? After having explored the opportunities of the jazz orchestra for the past twenty years, Schneider finally showed herself as a composer of music for a symphony orchestra for the first time since her days at university. This happened 12 June, at the 2011 Ojai Music Festival. Schneider had written what the critic Josef Woodard called a “lovely, poignant song cycle” (Woodard quoted on Schneider 2011). The composition *Winter Morning Walks* was based on poems written by the Midwesterner Ted Kooser. The Australian Chamber Orchestra and soprano Dawn Upshaw performed the piece

together with a few selected members of the Maria Schneider Orchestra. Schneider is currently in the process of making a recording of this work.

1.2 The Maria Schneider Orchestra

The Maria Schneider Orchestra is, as already mentioned, one of the most stable large jazz ensemble configurations since the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and plays a big part in making the music of Maria Schneider sound the way it does. In order to understand the workings of The Maria Schneider Orchestra and its success, Frank Kimbrough feels it is important to be aware of the following:

I've been with her for nearly 20 years. Many of the horn players – Scott Robinson, Rich Perry, George Flynn, Keith O'Quinn, Laurie Frink, Tony Kadleck, Greg Gisbert, and Ben Monder have all been with her for that length of time or longer. Ingrid Jensen and Charlie Pillow have been in the band for at least 16 or 17 years. Jay Anderson appeared on her first recording, and came back to the band 10 years later. These are relationships of long standing, some going back to Maria's college days. I don't think this has happened since the Ellington/Basie days, when they kept some personnel for decades. Maria's generosity of spirit is what keeps the band together. There isn't enough work, as in the old days, to keep everyone employed full-time, but there's a tremendous loyalty and friendship in the band, and that's quite rare. Everyone loves Maria because of the care she takes both in creating the music and environments for it to be played, and for her exceptional love and care for the musicians involved in realizing it (Kimbrough 2011).

The fact that the musicians and Schneider know each other so well not only makes it easier to communicate, but Schneider is able to write especially for the individual players in her band. There is something highly Ellingtonian in Schneider's attitude to her musicians. Like Schneider, Ellington did not write merely for instruments. He wrote for the specific people who were playing them (Berendt 1991:81). In addition Schneider often brings her musicians into the compositional process, showing them ideas and receiving ideas, getting to know what works and what does not. According to Berendt, good jazz composers understand that jazz composition means a "dialogue between the composer and the performer" (1991:81). In his book *Making the Scene. Contemporary New York City Big Band Jazz*, Alex Stewart point out that this method of creating music has at times been a source for misunderstanding among those unfamiliar with the scene. He writes that

[r]igid conceptualization of the roles of composition, arranging and improvisation and failure to understand dialogical processes involved in much jazz composition have led some writers to conclude incorrectly that a composers such as Ellington was not a composer at all" (Stewart 2007:19).

However, part of Ellington's success "was the dynamic willpower with which [he] stamped his ideas on his musicians, yet giving them the impression that he was only helping them to

unfold and develop their hidden powers” (Berendt 1991:77). He gave his musicians room to blossom at the same time as keeping the band going in the direction that he wanted. This is very much the case for Schneider as well, even if it might manifest itself in different ways than with Ellington. Communication of this sort highly benefits from the stability Schneider and Ellington’s ensembles can and could pride themselves with.

Before concluding this short subchapter, I will give an overview of the instrumentation of The Maria Schneider Orchestra. Whereas the standard instrumentation of a big band is that of a rhythm section (guitar, piano, bass and drums), brass section (4 trumpets, 4 trombones) and a saxophone section (2 alto saxophones, 2 tenor saxophones and a baritone saxophone), where in some cases the saxophones can double on flutes and clarinets, the instrumentation of the MSO is slightly different. First and foremost, this is due to the large amount of instrument doublings found in the saxophone section. In fact, this is a section often referred to as reeds in Schneider’s score.

A look at the overview of musicians playing on Schneider’s most recent album, *Sky Blue*, serves as a guide to the instrumentation of the MSO (Schneider 2006b)

Reeds:

STEVE WILSON: Alto, soprano, clarinet, flute, alto flute

CHARLES PILLOW: Alto, clarinet, piccolo, flute, alto flute, bass flute

RICH PERRY: tenor/flute

DONNY MCCASLIN: tenor, clarinet

SCOTT ROBINSON: baritone, clarinet bass clarinet

Brass

TONY KADLECK: Trumpet/ flugelhorn

JASON CARDER: Trumpet/ flugelhorn

LAURIE FRINK: Trumpet/ flugelhorn

INGRID JENSEN: Trumpet/ flugelhorn

KEITH O’QUINN: Trombone

RYAN KEBERLE: Trombone

MARSHALL GILKES: Trombone

GEORGE FLYNN: Bass trombone and contrabass trombone

Rhythm Section

BEN MONDER: Guitar

FRANK KIMBROUGH: Piano

JAY ANDERSON: Bass

CLARENCE PENN: Drums

Others:

GARY VERSACE: Accordion on *The Pretty Road*, *Aires de Lando* and *Cerulean Skies*

LUCIANA SOUZA: Voice on *The Pretty Road* and *Cerulean Skies*

GONZALO GRAU: Cajon/ palmas and percussion on *Aires de Lando* (right) and percussion on *Rich's Piece* and *Cerulean Skies*.

JOHN WIKAN: Cajon/ palmas, percussion on *Aires de Lando* (left) and percussion on *Rich's Piece* and *Cerulean Skies*.

This ensemble offers a great amount of opportunities and flexibility when it comes to orchestration, especially when adding the many mutes possible for the brass section. The availability of a variety of woodwind instruments and the fact that she rarely uses alto saxophones in her pieces are some of the main reasons why Schneider's music has a very orchestral sound to it. And as Frank Kimbrough has put it: "I think each member of the band plays a role in shaping the piece – one personnel change, and everything is different. That's the beauty of it" (Kimbrough 2011).

1.3 Maria Schneider's Main Influences

To say that Maria Schneider has listened to a lot of music would be an understatement. She herself has explained how she gets inspiration from everything from Ravel to Ellington and Gil Evans, flamenco and different Latin American rhythms, phrasings and harmonies.

However, there are two jazz composers and arrangers that perhaps more than anyone else has put their mark on Schneider. The two men in question are Gil Evans and Bob Brookmeyer. In this section I will give a short account of how these two men have influenced Schneider's music.

1.3.1 Gil Evans (1912–1988)

Gil Evans (Ian Ernest Gilmore Evans) hardly needs an introduction to those familiar with the big band scene. He has been an immensely influential arranger and composer of big band music and is known for his very characteristic sound. During his lifelong career Evans played an important role in the development of cool jazz, modal jazz and jazz fusion, working with musicians such as Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan and Jimi Hendrix. Gunther Schuller writes that

Even in his most elaborate scores Evans succeeded in preserving the essential spontaneity and improvisatory nature of jazz, achieving a rare symbiosis between composed and improvised elements (Schuller 2012).

As already mentioned, Schneider worked for Gil Evans for three years and she has repeatedly expressed her admiration for his music:

I loved the subtlety. I loved how deeply expressive it was. It had all the soft shifts in orchestration of classical music with the spontaneous exchange of ideas and rhythmical aspects of jazz (Schneider in Sturm 1998:vi).³

Gil's music is filled with detail—but detail that feels airy and uncluttered, arrived at by the gracefulness of the simplest solution (Schneider in Sturm 1998:vii).

These two quotations represent two areas in which Gil Evans' influence is perhaps the most evident in Schneider's music, his ability to create unique orchestrations and his sense of economy when composing.

One of the most easily detectable features of Evans' orchestration that can be traced in Schneider's music, is that of the instrumentation used, or rather the experimentation with different instrumentations, both when it comes to the ensemble itself and to orchestral blends used throughout his arrangements. Gil Evans was known for creating unique colors by introducing non-traditional instruments to the jazz big band. French horns, flutes, tuba, tabla, tenor violin, double reeds (saxophone section where the players double on flute and clarinet) and special kinds of percussion instruments are all examples of this. On the recording *Claude Thornhill and his Orchestra* (1947) the instrumentation is that of a flute trio; a reed section where the saxophonists all play instruments such as clarinets, bass clarinets and flute; two French horns; three trumpets; two trombones and a tuba, in addition to a standard rhythm section.

³ The interview is paginated with Roman numerals.

The distinctive sound of Gil Evans' arrangements are further explained by the fact that he loosened up the divide between the brass and saxophone section in the big band, creating blends consisting of instruments from several sections. The more traditional approach to big band music where the brass and saxophone sections have highly specialized functions is exemplified in the music of Count Basie in arrangements such as "Teddy the Toad" found on *The Complete Atomic Basie* (1957).

Where the Flamingos Fly (1961) is a good example of how Gil Evans creates shifts in color by continually changing the use of orchestral blends. A gesture consisting of the notes D-E-F-A (1-2-3-5) played as eight notes combined with a motif in the bass clarinet is present throughout the arrangement and is presented to the listener already in the introduction. This gesture moves around in the ensemble continually being presented in a new color. It begins in the piano before going on to being doubled by instruments such as the guitar, flute, trumpet and the soprano saxophone. Later in the piece it continues to move through the arrangement in different kinds of orchestrations. There is a continuous development on the orchestrational level of the piece, something which allows Gil Evans to be very economical in his use of material without losing the attention of the listener. This is highly reminiscent of how Schneider uses orchestrations, especially on pieces such as *Choro Dançado*.

The other main feature of Gil Evans' way of writing music that has highly inspired Schneider is his sense of economy. Gil Evans tends to focus on as few ideas as possible and is reluctant to adding anything to his arrangements unless it is absolutely necessary. Arrangements such as *Moon Dreams* on Miles Davies' *Birth of the Cool* album (1950) and the already mentioned *Where Flamingoes Fly* are examples of this. His arrangements can consist of as little as two ideas that are being developed on or returned to throughout the arrangement, quite similar to the way in which Schneider composes many of her pieces. His composing resonates a classical way of thinking as ideas presented in the beginning of his pieces often are brought back towards the end of it, creating coherence and a sense of unity. Another feature that contributes to this is Evans' use of small hooks that draw the listener in. This can also be found in many of Schneider's pieces, such as *Wyrgly* and *Aires de Lando* (2007). To be able to compose with an effective simplicity like this is something most composers, not only Schneider aspire to do.

1.3.2 Bob Brookmeyer (1929–2011)

His music is made up of the mysterious musical elements that make one want to dance, that make composers and arrangers with the very best ears still wonder how he did it, that make something that's incredibly complex, feel whole, seamless and effortless (Schneider 2011b).

Bob Brookmeyer is considered one of the best jazz composers and arrangers of our time, but is perhaps better known for his skills on the valve trombone and the piano. He played with musicians such as Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan and was the co-founder of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra (1965) (Robinson and Kernfield 2011). He was active on the big band scene both in the US and in Europe and experienced a renaissance as a composer and arranger when he in the 1990s established his 18-piece New Art Orchestra in Cologne with young up-and-coming European jazz musicians. Brookmeyer is known for his distinct way of orchestrating, but perhaps most of all for his great sense of form.

Bob Brookmeyer's influence on Maria Schneider can hardly be exaggerated. Schneider first encountered his music when she was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota and has explained listening to his *You Make Me Smile* in the following manner: "It made me flip. It was so unique and compelling, so refreshingly creative and full of personality" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:vii). When she received the grant to study with him in 1988, she admitted to feeling both "really lucky—and scared" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:vii).

In interviews, Schneider herself mentions several things that she has learned from Brookmeyer. One of them is a certain way of thinking. Schneider admired his way of continuously moving and growing in his writing and has since tried to demand the same of herself, something in which Brookmeyer encouraged by helping her focus her ideas. Like Schneider Brookmeyer has an almost classical approach to form, or at the very least one can say that he has a very deliberate approach to it. Form is said by many to be the last frontier in jazz composition and arranging and to a large extent one can say that Schneider has gotten her sense of form from Brookmeyer, just like she has developed her sense of orchestration and coloring with Gil Evans.

An example of how Brookmeyer thinks of form is found in the liner notes written for his last recording, *Standards* (Schneider 2011b). These are coincidentally written by Maria Schneider herself. According to her, one of Brookmeyer's "strongest points in teaching [was]: *a solo should only happen when the only thing that can happen is a solo*" (Schneider 2011b). Her mentor's influence is echoed when she says in an interview with Fred Sturm that "[t]o realize

I can reinvent form every time I write is daunting. [...]I develop the form based on my dramatic needs. I arrive at every piece differently” (Schneider in Sturm 1998:xii). This is quite different from the habitual approach to form that is sometimes found in jazz music.

Another element concerning form is the way Brookmeyer approaches the idea of writing *backgrounds*. During solos, it is common to at some point introduce a background to the soloist in order to provide him or her with some support, create variation or to increase the dynamic level of the part. However, this is also a feature that is so commonly used that a number of conventions exist when writing it. Schneider objects to backgrounds being written because that is historically what you are supposed to do behind a solo and not really giving it any more reflection (Schneider 2011a). It is, perhaps, simply put, but it does have some truth to it.

Schneider explains how Bob Brookmeyer feels that the term *backgrounds* is a little misleading, and speaks of these figures as *musical enhancements*. Instead of thinking that you are creating a background to the soloist, you should think that you are creating something that is meaningful to the rest of the piece as well, that the backgrounds have purpose related to the rest of the work (Schneider 2011a). This way of thinking is to a great extent in line with Gil Evans’ sense of economy when composing and is perhaps one of the main reasons why Schneider’s compositions develop in such an organic or coherent manner. Her skillful application of musical enhancements creates lines that bind the entire composition together, even when you have unpredictable elements such as improvisation present in the mix. This use of musical enhancements will be further addressed in chapter 3.

Even though Schneider claims that it was Gil Evans who was her main influence when it comes to orchestration, it is not difficult to hear a similarity of sound between Brookmeyer and Schneider as well. This might also be partly due to the fact that they both are inspired by the same person. However, listening to the pieces that made Schneider “flip” (Schneider in Sturm 1998:vii), it is easy to hear a similarity of sound with her early arrangements. *Wyrgly* and pieces such as *Dance You Monster to My Soft Song* (*Evanescence*, 1994) are examples of this. I believe this is because of the larger features such as the choice of harmonic language, but also due to the choice of effects, such as glissando.

The soft orchestral sound of both Brookmeyer’s and Schneider’s later works bear a great deal of resemblance. This is perhaps largely due to three things. First of all, the instrumentation of

the jazz ensembles. Both the New Art Orchestra and The Maria Schneider Orchestra have saxophone players who play several instruments, and they both choose to take advantage of those colors frequently. In addition they both tend to extend their orchestra with additional instruments to create a specific kind of sound. Brookmeyer continually has a synthesizer doubling the piano creating an almost unnoticeable shimmer on all the music that is being played. Like in Schneider's music, the piano has a very central role, and the use of the synthesizer might be seen as something of a parallel to Schneider's recent introduction of the accordion to her band. The accordion often doubles the piano in a similar way that the synthesizer does in the New Art Orchestra. Gary Versace was first brought in to play the accordion on *Concert in a Garden*, but has since become a permanent member of the orchestra. Schneider herself jokingly admitted in a lecture at Lincoln Hall that the accordion "makes you be something much more exotic than you are" (Schneider 2009).

Secondly, they both compose a kind of music almost without hard attacks whatsoever. The phrasing is much more like that of a classical orchestra than it is of a big band where the score usually is littered with different kinds of accents. These accents are commonly played in a much more forceful manner than in classical music. Thirdly, there are similarities in the use of voicings. Both Schneider and Brookmeyer employs an extensive use of spread voicings, including one kind of spread voicing that consists of perfect intervals (i.e. perfect fifths and perfect fourths) with a major or minor second in the middle. This creates a sound that is open, lush and crisp at the same time.

Considering orchestration, I find that in some ways, Schneider is almost more nuanced than Brookmeyer in his work. While Brookmeyer tends to find a color combination (a set of instruments playing together creating a specific blend) and stick to that over longer periods of time in each composition, Schneider tends to continually create different shadings to what is happening. There is often one instrument that is the core of the sound when she creates a melodic line, but then she continually adds and removes other instruments to create minor nuances and shadings to the sound. As in Gil Evans' music it is as if the colors are continually evolving as the piece progresses.

When it comes to form, however, I feel it is a little the other way around. The nuances found in Schneider's coloring, are found in Brookmeyer's sense of form. Whereas it is rarely a doubt as to where one part begins and another ends, it is often more difficult to tell in Brookmeyer's latest music. He frequently uses *dovetailing* (overlapping of elements in the

music) as a way of shifting from one part of the piece to the next without the audience realizing what has happened until well into the new part. This is one of the things that makes his music exiting and creates the seamlessness that Schneider so warmly talks about.

2 Theory and methods

2.1 Analytical challenges

There are many challenges related to the analysis of jazz. For many years popular music and jazz was regarded in a negative manner largely due to the fact that it was judged by the wrong criteria. Analysts with a classical background would analyze jazz applying methods created for the study of classical music. They would look for thematic development and organic unity, finding the music lacking. On the other hand, many academics within the field of jazz have also applied these criteria for slightly different reasons. Robert Walser writes in his article “‘Out of Notes’: Miles Davis” (1995) that many academics are drawn to what he calls “‘classicizing’ strategies for legitimating jazz” (Walser 1995:169). This involves trying to gain respect for jazz by comparing it to what is regarded as a more prestigious form of music, namely classical music. In this context a number of problematic issues ensue. Walser mentions results such as the emphasis on “individualism rather than collectivism, autonomous statements rather than dialogue and collaboration”, but more than anything the problem lies in the fact that the movement of classicizing jazz has “never been able to do justice to the music” (Walser 1995:170). Attempting to legitimate jazz as a serious form of music, analysis has been influenced by arguments such as “jazz is worthwhile because even its improvised solos demonstrate organic unity and motivic coherence” (Walser 1995:171). He further writes that:

Virtually the whole tradition of musicological analysis of jazz, from Winthrop Sargeant on, has been caught between the admission that jazz is different from classical music (and probably inferior), and the desire to legitimate jazz according to the criteria commonly used to analyze classical music (Walser 1995:171).

This line of thought results in analysts looking for, and often finding, thematic or motivic coherence, but overlooking what is at the core of the music, such as timbre, affect and history (Walser 1995:172). Walser writes that jazz creates meaning through “signifyin’” meaning that it “works through reference, gesture and dialogue to suggest multiple meanings through association” (Walser 1995:168). When a jazz musician improvises over the chord progression to a song, he refers back to the original melodic line of that song and all of the previously known versions of it. There is a complex play of intertextuality both on part of the listener and of the performer(s). This is a feature of jazz—and other styles of music—that is neglected in classical formal analysis.

In his book *Studying Popular Music* (1990), Richard Middleton discusses why musicology traditionally has been so poorly equipped to analyze popular music. First of all there “is a terminology slanted by the needs and history of a particular music (‘classical music’)” (Middleton 1990:104)⁴. There are two sides to this problem. Firstly, it is a fact that there is a rich vocabulary covering certain aspects of music, and a poor one covering others. Features such as harmony, certain aspects of form and part-writing are examples of the former while “rhythm, pitch nuance and gradation outside the steps of the diatonic/chromatic system, and timbre” are examples of the latter (Middleton 1990:104). The other aspect of this problem is that the existing vocabulary often is ideologically loaded. Examples of this can be found by comparing the terms *melody* and *tune*, where the first might suggest something more elaborate or graceful and the other has connotation to simpler forms of music such as whistling in the street. Comparing the word *ostinato* to *riff* or *vamp* create similar forms of association. Middleton writes that

these connotations are ideological because they always involve selective, and often unconsciously formulated, conceptions of what music *is*. If this terminology is applied to *other* kinds of music, clearly the results will be problematical (Middleton 1990:104).

Secondly there “is a methodology slanted by the characteristics of notation” (Middleton 1990:104). Middleton writes that the typical musical corpus is notated and is a result of those practices. Philip Tagg calls the result of this practice “notational centrality” (Tagg 1979:28–29). There are two problematic aspects related to this. Firstly, it means that analysts tend to favor those aspects of the music that easily lend themselves to notation and conversely overlook those that do not. The second aspect of this problem is that “notational centrality” tends “to encourage reification: the score comes to be seen as ‘the music’, or perhaps the music in ideal form” (Middleton 1990:105). This downgrades the aspect of performance, which in the case of jazz is highly unfortunate since so much of the music is improvised. The recordings of jazz music does in a way contribute to this aspect as it is easy to regard this “frozen” form of the music as an authoritative version of a work although one of the main components of jazz is that of reinvention.

The aspects of “notational centrality” are important to consider when analyzing the music of Maria Schneider and big band music in general. In many ways, the practices of the jazz orchestra lie somewhere between that of jazz in general and classical music. This is because

⁴What is meant by classical music is the classical standard repertoire, the canon based on works from the 16th century until impressionism early in the 20th century.

the scope of the ensemble requires notated music to a larger extent than that of smaller jazz ensembles. Jazz music is often played without a score. Even though using popular music as a starting point (such as a *Tin Pan Alley* tune or other songs taken from *The Real Book*), is common. These are often played from memory and are rarely played exactly the way they are written. The song, or the *lead sheet* or *head*, creates the foundation on which the performance is based. It is a framework that the musicians use as a reference when improvising. Playing melodic variations, or signifying on a tune, is a skill that is necessary for any jazz musician to master. In a big band, the lead sheet often services the same function, but the variations of the melody are mostly written out in the score, with the exceptions of improvised parts. This means that this form of music is centered on notation to a larger extent than other forms of jazz music, but there are still many aspects of it that would be lost should one analyze the music based on the score alone. This is also true for classical music, but to a lesser extent than in jazz.

Let us start by discussing the rhythm section. In most traditional big band arrangements the rhythm section is free to improvise a substantial part of its accompaniment. The drummer receives a basic groove or style of playing in addition to indications of where he should play fills, accentuate kicks in the horn sections and similar. The bass sometimes gets a written-out bass line, but in many cases this is only to indicate rhythmic style or to provide an example for the bass to play should he not be used to improvising lines like these. The pianist and guitarist get anything ranging from scores that are to be played strictly as written to chord charts containing so-called *slash notation with chords*, meaning that they are completely free to create their own accompaniment as long as they keep with the style of the piece (see chapter 5 for more information). In fact, if one wants the rhythm section to play exactly as written, it is necessary that the arranger writes just that or tells the players at rehearsal. Often it is enough to leave out the chord symbols to get the rhythm section to play at least something that is very close to what is written in the score. Schneider's music tends to have more written out parts for the rhythm section than what is common (see chapter 5).

It may seem self-evident that the soloist has free reign during the solo sections as long as they play something related to the harmonies given. They may play both “outside” and “inside” the given harmonic progressions, but the soloist should at all times use it as a reference when playing. This is usually true for most big band music. However, Schneider speaks of how “[t]he solo section often carries the piece to a contrasting place. The soloist needs to help that arrival feel inevitable. I’ve found that assigning too much responsibility to the soloist can be

risky” (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x). This does not mean that the soloist lacks opportunity to display their personality in the context of the piece, but it means that Schneider takes great efforts in creating backgrounds that guides the soloist to certain places. In addition she explains that when working with a band, she is careful to explain the intent of the piece before beginning to play. She gives an example from the piece *Wyrgly*:

Wyrgly is about a monster. At first it wasn’t easy to divulge my personal motivation behind the music. But in the case of *Wyrgly*, for example, it’s necessary in order to explain why the approach of that solo shouldn’t be bluesy or anything traditional. It should be monsteristic and atmospheric (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x).

In the score, all the information given to the soloist is a bass ostinato and the description “E-ish” (Schneider 1998:28). In other words, this is a solo part that is extremely free on paper, but is slightly less free in reality. Looking solely at the score would create an analysis that would be left wanting in several ways.

Other aspects of this are the conventions concerning how a soloist plays a melody that is written in the score. In classical music a soloist would normally play exactly what is written, albeit giving it their own interpretation, but in a jazz score the soloists are often allowed a little lee-way when it comes to interpreting a melody. In Schneider’s *Aires de Lando* (*Sky Blue*, 2007), a clarinet feature, the clarinet player stays relatively true to the score. However, he frequently embellishes the melody by adding notes in addition to occasionally using effects such as bending notes when making big leaps. He deviates from the score just enough to give it his own flare, but at the same time he is careful not to interrupt the overall idea, or to play in a way that fits the rest of the ensemble poorly.

Another aspect that makes analyzing jazz music in general, and Schneider’s music in particular, challenging is that there is no standardized way of notation when it comes to notating a number of aspects of the music. A lot of it is based on convention and requires a musician to know these conventions or to be instructed in them before playing a particular piece. As a pianist, one often has to sit down with a chord chart to determine whether or not the written parts indicate the horn figures or if it in fact is what one is supposed to play. What is written and how it is written in different parts in the rhythm section often depends on everything from the skill of the composer to different notational conventions.

The horns are a little more predictable regarding their response to a score. They usually play what is written. However, some features of the music lacks standardized notation, which means that agreements must be made internally in the ensembles. There is no standardized

way of writing accents and the opinions on how to play a crescendo, for instance, are to say the very least, diverse. It is also the case that these features of the music are often played very differently in classical music and jazz. The lack of standardization is both a source of frustration and a source of individuality and creativity in jazz. It is the case that many arrangers and composers, especially in big band music, use the manners in which to play accents and dynamic features to create an individual sound for their ensemble. As was touched upon in chapter 1, an example of this is how Bob Brookmeyer's *New Art Orchestra* never attacks *marcatos* and *staccatos* in the same way as a big band traditionally would (i.e. using very strong attacks). You hardly ever hear a "bang", but rather a "whoa," a softer and warmer attack than what is common in traditional big band music.

What I am trying to show by giving these examples is that jazz musicians to a certain extent, have a different attitude to the score than most classical musicians. Hence, interpreting Schneider's music purely based on the written material would be unfortunate. Notation simply does not cover every aspect of the music and even if it could, the complexity of the information given would be so great that it hardly would prove effective as a means of conveying what the musicians should play. Neither do I think it would be desirable to have a notational system that conveyed this much information as it could result in a music without life, individuality and energy, and that would be true regardless of genre. It is the case, however, that the score *is* important in gaining insight into the compositions of Schneider, and it will be used as the main source of information in my analysis. The analysis has also, however, been influenced by attentive listening to the recordings.

Another aspect of Maria Schneider's music that has proved challenging is that of genre. This is due to two main reasons. Firstly, because Schneider's music is so heavily influenced by classical music and its concept of form, the terminology used to describe form in jazz is found lacking. As mentioned above, relating ideas such as those of organic unity and coherence to popular music and jazz can be highly unfortunate in many contexts. The ideal of organic unity can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle and was made famous in the Romantic era by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge who describes form as being "innate; it shapes and develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form" (Coleridge 2000:489). The ideal of an organic form was later incorporated into music exemplified by Guido Adler whose opinion was that a composition should be

based on laws of becoming, of the rise and fall of organic development. Music is an organism, a plurality of single organisms which in their changing relationships and interdependencies form a totality (Adler quoted in Bent and Pople 2012).

This way of viewing music is controversial even within the classical domain and has been opposed by theorists such as Donald Francis Tovey (Bent and Pople 2012). It is, however, the case that I have already used the term organic several times during this thesis. I have spoken about how Schneider's music seems to be evolving in an organic manner and I have spoken of there being internal coherence in her work. These are dangerous terms to apply to any composition regarding the heavy debate related to these terms. There are two sides to this story.

First of all, Schneider has a classical background and desires to create a certain red thread throughout her compositions. In an interview she herself admitted to *Hang Gliding* being one of her favorite compositions because of the way she managed to create a motivic development throughout the piece (Schneider 2011a). Of course this has been done in jazz before, but Schneider seems to have a consistent relationship to this kind of application of themes and motifs, and I believe it partly can be tracked back to her classical background and partly due to the philosophy behind *musical enhancements* (Chapter 1.3.2. p. 15). In some ways this is the jazz version of developing themes. Still, when I do mention that the composition develops in an organic way, I do not so much mean that it is part of a plant where each element is necessary for it to work, but rather that it seems to develop in a natural way, in the way that it is supposed to. Schneider surprises the listener with new orchestrations of recent themes or new harmonic progressions, but at the same time it all feels effortless and intuitively right. These are of course very loose terms which carries with them a lot of subjectivity and are of an abstract nature, but my belief is that much of this effortlessness stems from the way she creates forward motion through orchestration and how she takes advantage of previously presented material. Although one should be careful to look for relationships where there are none and putting into the music what you want to be there, rather than what is, it seems the case that in most of Schneider's music, the composer is at all times in touch with the overall vision of the composition and that the smaller elements of it should fit into that larger vision. This results in a structure where it makes sense to talk of thematic ideas rather than a *head* and of sections or parts (also used in jazz) rather than *choruses*. This also means that formal analysis makes sense in this context, at the very least as one of the several analytical approaches that will be used in this thesis. In my opinion it is more than appropriate to use

analytical tools from the classical tradition as long as one is conscious of one's motivation and adjusts the method according to the needs of the music analyzed.

2.2 Formal analysis

Historically, analyzing form has meant assimilating a piece “into one existing formal prototype or another” (Cook 1994:9). In *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (1994) Nicholas Cook writes the simplest of these prototypes were “purely sectional–binary–ternary form” (Cook 1994:9), but the more complex forms such as the rondo or sonata, are by definition thematic. The analytical process consisted in distinguishing the thematic material of the composition and labeling them using letters such as A, B, B1 and so forth, while referring to the rest of the material as “non-thematic” or “transitional.” Cook says that if a critique should be made against such thinking it would be that the emphasis on the themes of the composition might be inconsistent with the listener's experiences seeing as the material regarded as “linking the themes together” might very well be what the listener's attention is drawn towards. Another critique made against formal analysis was that it seemed to attempt to fit all music into prescribed forms at any cost. This is ironic because formal analysis often looks for organic unity and a prescribed form [“mechanic form”] was by Coleridge regarded as the complete opposite of organic form (Coleridge 2000:489). This was partly due to the fact that there had been a misinterpretation of the German analyst and aesthetician A.B. Marx' understanding of form. According to Cook, Marx believed that the form of a piece “must derive from its expressive content” (Cook 1994:13). He felt that form was an “externalization of content” and that “there were as many forms as there were works of art” (Marx in Cook 1994:13). He did, however, also acknowledge that traditions of forms arose over time and in explaining this, he coined the term “sonata form,” which was taken out of context and applied as an analytical tool (Cook 1994:13). At the beginning of the twentieth century, progressive analysts were dissatisfied with this misinterpretation for three reasons: Firstly, because people felt that “the normative forms were no more than pedagogical fictions” (Cook 1994:13); secondly, because there was an emphasis on melodic material rather than tonal function. This was something that gradually changed. The third objection was that it did not matter how well a composition fit into a traditional form, but rather “that it was the functional, and not the historical, aspects of musical form that mattered” (Cook 1994:13). They felt that musical form only was of relevance in relation to such things as harmonic and motivic content, and that the separation of the two parameters was artificial. Cook describes that these analysts regarded

form much in the same manner as was Marx's original intentions. He further writes that they might have overreacted a little considering the fact that "there are clear traditions within individual forms so that for instance a composer, when writing a sonata, makes certain presuppositions about the form which derive from earlier composers" (Cook 1994:14).

Charles Rosen's view of form is one that is highly interesting in relation to Schneider's music. In his books *The Classical Style* and *Sonata Forms* he attempts to explain the diversity of forms "in terms of the aesthetic values that underlie them" (Cook 1994:14). According to Cook, Rosen felt that one of the composers' aims was "to delineate form clearly [...]. But the kind of form they wanted to delineate [...] was not a pattern of themes or keys as such; rather it was a certain kind of structural coherence" (Cook 1994:14). This is especially interesting as my motives behind applying formal analysis to Schneider's pieces is to reveal the inner coherence of Schneider's compositions that can be detected partly by analyzing her use of thematic material. Referring to the sonata form as a "tonal drama" is something that often occurs in this context (Cook 1994:14), and even though Schneider's pieces are not particularly aimed at creating a tonal drama in the same sense as the sonata form does, it is the case that she is highly interested in the dramatic development of her pieces. She has admitted to realizing that she "can reinvent form every time [she] writes" and that she develops "form based on her dramatic needs" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:xii).

Rosen's view of form coincides with Dahlhaus' definition of formal analysis as a method that "explains the structure of a work 'in terms of functions and relationships between sections and elements.'" (Dahlhaus quoted in Bent and Pople). In this thesis, formal analysis will at least partly be the foundation of much of the analytical work done, but first and foremost will it be used during chapter 3 where I will be tracking thematic material in three of Schneider's compositions in order to show how the reuse of thematic material is involved in creating internal coherence in Schneider's music, hence helping the improvisation to be integrated into the whole. It has also been used in creating form overviews of the different pieces relying partly on the score, but to a great extent also on a performed version of the compositions. This last part has been important as Schneider's music can often easily be separated into sections while listening to it, because it is important to her that there should be contrasts in atmosphere throughout the piece and that the piece should feel like a "story" or a "journey" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:xii).

One of the great challenges when working on this thesis has been how to describe form in the most comprehensible manner possible. Each of Schneider's works contains several thematic ideas and secondary thematic ideas, and all of them exist in a number of variations. I have chosen a system of labeling that is relatively traditional, but adjusted to this thesis' particular needs. Below follows a short description of how the form of the composition has been accounted for:

Firstly, the composition has been divided into larger sections labeled with roman numerals. This has been done in order to avoid confusion with the labeling of the thematic material. Sub-sections of these larger sections are referred to by measure numbers.

Thematic material has been labeled with letters where *main* thematic material is labeled with capital letters *A*, *B* and *C*. *Secondary* thematic material has, where relevant, been labeled *S* (contrapuntal lines and so on). Seeing as there are so many versions of each thematic idea, I have found it necessary to separate these variations from each other with additional labeling. Thematic ideas that stems from the same material are labeled in this manner: A_1 , A_2 , B_1 , B_4 and so on. A_1 refers to the first occurrence of the thematic idea labeled *A*. Whenever I refer to all versions of a thematic idea at once, I only use the capital letter of that theme: "All the variations of *A* occurs in sections I and IV." Sub-phrases of these ideas are labeled in the exact same manner, only with lower case letters. Examples of this are: a_2 , b_3 , s_1 .

I have not referred to any shorter motifs except the so-called the "Hokey-motif". Since this is the only motif that has needed labeling in this thesis, no further organization of motif-labeling has been made. Each analysis in this thesis is preceded by a form overview where the main aspects of the composition are displayed.

During the analytical part of this thesis, I will naturally need to refer to different pitches on a frequent basis. Whereas there is little controversy concerning the use of letters as note names (C,D,E,F,G,A,B), there exists a number of different systems on how to label the octaves. The most common are *English Pitch Notation*, *Solfège Pitch Notation*, *Helmholtz Pitch Notation* and *Scientific Pitch Notation* (SPN). In this thesis I will use the latter four mentioned. This is an American system, where middle C is labeled C^4 (Kraemer 2012). The reason I have chosen to use this particular system, is that this thesis is written in American English about an American composer and this is the system most commonly used at universities in the US. It is also easily comprehensible and distinguishable from the labeling of the thematic material (A_1 , B_2 etc.).

This thesis will not go into depth where harmonic relationships are concerned. However, in chapter 5, harmonic analysis will be performed in order to demonstrate how Schneider uses harmonic rhythm and modulation to structure a solo section. I will use Roman numeral analysis to describe this structure, since this is what is most commonly used in jazz, and hence is a language jazz musicians would be familiar with. More specifically, I will apply the version of harmonic analysis found in the two books *Advanced Harmonic Concepts* (2009) and *Beyond Functional Harmony* (1998) by Wayne J. Naus to my music. Naus classifies all chord progressions into three different key areas. If a chord progression is written with an *established* key area, “[a] key becomes established through the use of diatonic and diatonically related chords, common chord patterns, diatonic melody, cycle-5 root motion, common harmonic phrases and characteristic use of harmonic rhythm” (Naus 2009:19). In an established key, it is usually easy to hear what key you are in.

In an *implied* key, there is rarely, if ever a resolution or cadence to a I-chord. He writes that

[t]he harmony utilizes diatonic and diatonically related chords. These chords include secondary dominants, substitute dominants and modal interchange chords. The harmony reflects all characteristics of an established key, except a resolution to the I chord (Naus 2009:19).

The implied key progression carries with it a great deal of forward motion, since it is always looking for the root, but never finds it (Naus 2009:19).

While the two above-mentioned key areas can be described as *functional*, the last key area Naus describes, is non-functional. The *ambiguous* key area has no tonal center, hence the chords in such progressions have no function. Naus writes that the chord’s color is decided by the chords surrounding it, by what he calls *adjacent chordal relationships* (Naus 2009:19). Often all of these key areas can be found in *one* composition.

2.3 Orchestration

Maria Schneider is known for her use of orchestration, and she is often compared to a painter. R.J. DeLuke, for instance, calls her a “painter and aural poet” (DeLuke 2011) in his review in *allaboutjazz.com*. Studying Schneider’s orchestration is in essence the same as studying the *sound* of the Maria Schneider Orchestra, a sound which is almost as easily recognized as the voice of Ella Fitzgerald or Bill Evans’ style of playing the piano. You know it when you hear it. Despite this, there is a remarkable small amount of writings that dwell on Schneider’s use of orchestration. Two master theses have been written about Schneider’s music, Elizabeth MacKinney’s *Maria Schneider’s “Hang Gliding:” Dual Analyses for a Hybrid Musical Style*

(2008) and Alice Losik's *Analysis of Maria Schneider's "Green Piece"* (2007). Neither of the two theses talks of orchestration in any great length, although Losik's combination of the Hindemith dissonance model and pitch class set analysis to explain Schneider's use of tension in chords is interesting. The fact that these two do not focus specifically on orchestration, hence does not mean that their work is not relevant or interesting—it merely means that there is room for more research on the topic.

Orchestration is an important tool in giving the soloist information about the character of a piece, or a section of a piece. It also creates variation where the composer relies on thematic unity in order to create internal coherence of a composition. It is, however, the case that orchestration is one of the least tangible objects of analysis as it deals with parameters that are not easily measured or quantified. Rolf Inge Godøy writes in his article "Skisse til en instrumentasjonsanalytisk systematikk" [Sketch of an Organized Approach to Orchestration Analysis],"⁵ that historically orchestration has been pushed into the background as analyses have tended to favor a work's thematic or motivic content, form and harmonic foundation (Godøy 1993:2). These are all parameters that can be found by looking at a score and there is a highly developed vocabulary for it.

Godøy's article seems to be directed mostly at the study of classical music, however, and in the world of jazz the situation is slightly different. Thematic development is often of less consequence in analysis than parameters such as harmony and voicings. Seeing as the big band is a much more limited pool of color than the symphony orchestra, creating one's own sound has been of great essence. That does not, however, mean that there exists any organized analytical method for looking at orchestration in jazz compositions. But it does mean that certain features of the orchestration analysis that Godøy proposes might have a better developed vocabulary in the world of jazz. This is especially true for voicings. The title of the book *Modern Jazz Voicings Composing for small and medium jazz ensembles* (Pease, Pulling and Gold 2001) show that one of the main skills for a prospective jazz arranger or composer is to acquire the knowledge of how to create different voicings and how these sound. The book *Composing for Large Jazz Ensemble* (Lowell and Pulling 2003) has the same area of focus. It is, however, the case that literature analyzing jazz, tends to fall a little short when discussing orchestration. Fred Sturm's *Changes over Time. The Evolution of Jazz Arranging* (1995),

⁵ All the quotes from Godøy's article are my translations.

includes lengthy descriptions of the orchestration of jazz arrangements. These descriptions, however, involve nothing more than a summary of what instruments play at any given time. Steve Lajoie, on the other hand, writes about *sound* in his thesis about Gil Evans (2003). These descriptions are fairly good, but there is a lack of attributing value to the type of voicing used when discussing it. In general, many of the dimensions that Godøy describes as the main features of orchestration are discussed in jazz analysis. But I find that these dimensions are discussed separately rather than together, despite the fact that the sound of a piece of music is a complexity consisting of these three parameters that are heavily dependent on each other. This is to a great extent in line with a law of acoustics. It explains that if you listen to two violins, you are able to hear them as if they are two violins playing. However, once you add a third violin, they are no longer only heard as three instruments, but also as one section, one very particular sound, meaning that the sound of the individual instruments change when they are involved in a blend of more than three instruments.

Before venturing any further into the discussion of orchestration, it is necessary to clarify the term itself. In Godøy's article *instrumentation* is defined as "the knowledge of the actual sound of a musical work or a section of a musical work" (Godøy 1993:2). However, in order to be in accordance with American terminology, what Godøy calls instrumentation, will be referred to as *orchestration* throughout this thesis. This is also practical in the sense that the term *instrumentation* will be used describing the actual configuration of an ensemble or a part of an ensemble.

Godøy's method is that of *multidimensional* analysis with an increasing amount of differentiating aspects from the musical substance. (Godøy 1993). Godøy presents the trisect of harmony, timbre and texture as the main and interrelating aspects of orchestration (Godøy 1993:10). These can be further divided into subcategories. The relative values of these are to be categorized by the application of a graded scale going from a maximum to a minimum, giving you dichotomies such as high-low, light-dark, foreground and background (Godøy 1993:9–10). This process is based on our own subjective listening experiences and has its origin in the way many of us already think when listening to music (Godøy 1993:9–10).

Differentiating *timbre* might be a problem, Godøy writes, as it is such a complex phenomenon. What we perceive is for instance not always equal to the sound's inherent acoustic qualities (Godøy 1993:11). The multidimensionality of this aspect makes it near impossible to create objective judgments about it. However, Godøy writes that in line with a

phenomenological train of thought, our subjective perception and organization of sound is good enough when organizing orchestration analysis. What this means, is that we can subjectively compare and contrast different sounds with each other by for instance using metaphors such as warm/cold or sharp/ soft, and hence use this ranking of qualities as the foundation for further differentiation (Godøy 1993:11–12). It should be mentioned, however, that this article was written almost twenty years ago, and substantial work has been done both in the development of new technology and in researching ways in which this technology can be applied to this area of research. Still, the scope of this thesis makes an analysis of the orchestration based partly on subjective reflection of different sounds fruitful.

In the context of orchestration, *harmony* plays an important part, but perhaps not in the way it is normally perceived in analysis. In the classical tradition, analyzing harmony usually means analyzing it as a forward-moving force in terms of progressions and so forth. In this case, harmony becomes interesting in terms of the *quality* of the different chords, how they are being voiced, voice leading, what and how many tension notes it contains (Godøy 1993:4–5). We can speak of the textural and acoustic organization of the chords (Godøy 1993:13). In jazz, we speak of *voicings*⁶. Jazz has a highly developed vocabulary describing different kinds of voicings, and some of these terms will appear in this thesis. I will mention the ones used in this text below.

The main differentiation between voicings is whether they are *close* or *spread*. In a *close* voicing, the chord structures are usually made by “hanging” chord tones below the top note in the voicing. The chord tones are included in as close intervals as possible (see fig. 2.1). A variant of the close voicing is called the *drop 2*. In drop 2-voicings, the chord tone that directly follows underneath the top note is moved to the very bottom of the voicing (see fig. 2.1). This is often used to avoid minor and major second intervals between the two top pitches, or to create a more open sound. The *spread voicing* tends to be built from the bottom note and upwards. These voicings are meant to be more open, warm and orchestral in sound. The lower intervals of the chord are distributed so as to obtain as much space between a least the lower instruments as possible, while the intervals between the higher instruments can become increasingly smaller (the trumpet voicing is often a *four-way-close*, a close voicing consisting of 4 notes, but may also be spread). Another term that will appear in this text is that of a *cluster*. According to *Modern Jazz Voicings*, “[c]lusters are voicings in which the

⁶ The paragraphs about voicings are based information found in *Modern Jazz voicings* (Pease and Pulling 2001)

prevailing interval between adjacent notes is a second.” The character of clusters is usually dense and highly dissonant (Pease and Pulling 2001:93). Lastly there are the voicings with *upper-structure triads*. An upper-structure triad is a complex sound consisting of both a separate triad in the top three instruments, and a representation of the basic chord, using 1, 3, 5 and 7 in the lower instruments. The two structures combined represent the given chord symbol since the “the three upper notes have a clear and identifiable triad sound” (Pease and Pulling 2001:109) in addition to consisting of notes that belong to the given chord symbol. This type of voicing is “used when the writer wants a powerful sound containing a high level of resonance” (Pease and Pulling 2001:93).

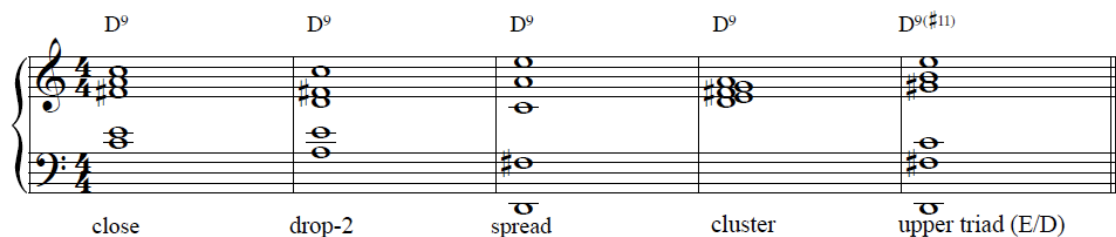


Figure 2.1. Demonstration of voicings

The last main aspect of orchestration is that of *texture*. This is a term that encompasses “knowledge of the rhythmic formation of the music and its contours on the basis of the underlying harmonies” (Godøy 1993:18). Godøy continues to write that “the textural architecture of the music creates the foundation for the establishment of different parts in the orchestration, as all the elements of the music can be provided by [...] textural function” (Godøy 1993:18). He points out that

a significant amount of that which can be referred to as ‘instrumentation’ is really a question of textual differentiation. Once you have a good grasp of the distribution of functions within the musical texture, the distribution or ‘assigning of roles’ of these functions for the different instruments are relatively easy to make. The main questions become those of deciding on color and the best possible solution pertaining to idiomatic writing for instruments, and an optimal acoustic organization (Godøy 1993:16).

The first step in differentiating textural functions is to divide the music into opposing features such as foreground/background, melody accompaniment, center/periphery, sustain/movement (Godøy 1993:19). Godøy then writes that the degree to which one has obtained an understanding of the orchestration is based on the extent to which one has been able to place the textural functions in a hierarchy (Godøy 1993:19). In his book *Orchestration* (1955), Walter Piston divides the musical fabric into seven different *types of texture*: Type I:

Orchestral unison; type II: Melody and accompaniment; type III: Secondary melody; Type IV: Part writing; type V: Contrapuntal texture; type VI: Chords; type VII: Complex texture (Piston 1973:355–405). In the three pieces that will be discussed in this thesis, only three of Piston's texture types are used; texture II, III, and VII. Below is a short description of each of these three types.

Texture type II, melody and accompaniment, is a texture of two elements and is one of the most frequently used types of texture. The accompaniment can consist of several sub-elements (Piston 1955:364-370). A typical example in a big band situation would be that of sustained chords in the rhythm section and kicks in the brass.

Texture type III, secondary melody, usually consists of three elements; a primary melody, a secondary melody and an accompaniment. The secondary melody may be a completely subordinate element (sometimes called countermelody) to the primary melody, or it may contain thematic material of similar importance. This means that it, at times, may be difficult deciding which melody is primary which is secondary (Piston 1955:374).

Texture type VII, complex texture, can be one of two things; it can be a combination of two or more of the textures I-VI, or it can be something Piston calls *tapestry of sound* (Piston 1955:405 and 411). This type of complex texture "is not the product of a synthesis of other textures, but it is an ensemble of many elements, none of which emerges as a primary element" (Piston 1955:409–411). *The Pretty Road* contains a section that can be called a *tapestry of sound*.

In the analysis, the different elements of the texture types will be labeled with letters (Primary melody (A), secondary melody (B), accompaniment (C) and so on).

Piston's texture types are useful when analyzing the orchestration of Maria Schneider as the different types seem to fit well with the different types of textures Schneider utilizes. In big band music it is usually relatively easy to divide the band into different roles as the instrumentation tends in many cases to be equal to the roles. The typical example might be that the saxophones play the melody while the brass plays kicks or lines based on guide notes. Such a division is rarely the case with Schneider, as she tends to mix the different groups and instruments in order to get a certain timbre or color. Hence dividing the group into functions actually helps clarify the musical image. It is also of positive value that the different functions can be used both on jazz music and on classical music, something which suits the hybrid style of Schneider's music well.

2.4 The LIF-model

How is it possible to create a piece that is supposed to be a vessel for very specific feelings and events when a third of it is based on improvisation? How do you incorporate the improvisation in such a way that it makes sense when looking at the larger structures of the work, especially when the composer herself insists on making the piece a collaboration?

I find that this is all about exploiting the areas of the composition where you are in control to the fullest— making it possess elements that tie the rest of the composition together as a structure, and using these as a foundation for the improviser too feed upon.

I have created a model stating the different *Levels of Individual Freedom (LIF)*, fig. 2.2.) it is possible to possess within a big band, and from that model I have concluded that there are certain areas of the big band where the influence of the composer is more evident than others. Looking at the different functions the sections in a big band have, it becomes clear that the big band not only can be divided into different instrument groups, but also into the functions of different sections of the ensemble based on what LIF is commonly used at any given time. These sections will naturally reveal themselves when I give an explanation of the LIF-model itself, beginning with a graphic display of the model. This model might state what is obvious, but it provides the thesis with a structure in addition to approaching arranging and composing from a slightly different point of view than what is most common.

LIF 1	Small amounts of individual freedom (the music that is to be “played as written”)
LIF 2	Some individual freedom (e.g. chord progressions plus additional information such as rhythmic notation, cues and the top note of voicings)
LIF 3	Traditional sense of individual freedom (Solo: improvisation over chord progression, improvisation over indicated tonal area with remarks. Accompaniment: Chord progressions with no or very limited amounts of additional information)
LIF 4	Great amount of individual freedom. (e.g. improvisation without time indication, improvisation without tonal center or loose definition of this)
LIF 5	Complete individual freedom (no set time, no indication of key or tonal center, no remarks in score- in fact, there is no score.)

Figure 2.2. The LIF-model

The LIF-model is divided into five *levels of individual freedom* that are not to be considered as discrete. There will always exist minor differences within each level that create border-line cases.

LIF 1—*small amounts of individual freedom*—is the level of individual freedom that can be found in the scores of most western art music, or in jazz music where the players are expected to play what is written. This most commonly occurs in the horn section of the large jazz ensemble, but the rhythm section also plays on this level occasionally.

LIF 2—*some individual freedom*—is one of the most complex levels of individual freedom as it is associated with a number of different notational techniques (See chapter 5). Typically LIF 2 can be found in the rhythm section while they are accompanying the rest of the band. Most of the time, the notation on LIF 2 is only considered a guide with a varying degree of additional information. This information can consist of rhythmic notation of the chords, chord symbols with top note of the voicings, or a groove that is scored but indicated to be played *simile ad lib*⁷.

LIF 3—*traditional level of individual freedom*—is the level of freedom that historically is given to the soloist of a big band, meaning a person improvising over a set of chord changes or a particular mode, usually in the foreground of the piece. It can also, however, be prescribed to the rhythm section when they are given parts that only consist of chord symbols and slash notation. This is very common in jazz in general. The score for the soloist and the rhythm section musician would look exactly the same on paper, but it is understood differently by the players because one of them will star in a leading role, while the other will possess the supporting one.

LIF 4—*great amount of individual freedom*—involves not having an established tonal center on which to focus the playing, or a very loose definition of this; *or* having no established time. This does occur at times in large ensemble music, but not very often. In Schneider's *The Pretty Road*, an example of this level is found in the second solo section where the concept of time is relinquished before it is reestablished in the following section.

⁷Meaning that you are given a rhythmic pattern or similar to play and are instructed to continue playing in a manner that is in keeping with this style, but not necessarily exactly as written.

LIF 5—*complete individual freedom*. This is a level that basically has no score. It is *both* lacking information about time feel *and* the tonal center of the piece. In essence the musician can play whatever he likes. *But*, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the player can *choose* to organize his music in some way, creating rhythmic patterns, slipping into tonal areas, using fixed intervals in addition to responding to the other musicians he plays with, if any. LIF 5 rarely occurs in large jazz ensemble music.

I did consider adding a LIF 0, where there is absolutely no individual freedom, whatsoever. I found it of no practical use, however, as this is a level that would never be actually played by any musician.

3 The Horns Part I:

Creating Thematic Coherence

3.1 Function

The large horn section in the jazz orchestra grew out of the smaller jazz combo during the late 1920s, and is the main reason why people started writing scores for jazz ensembles. In many ways one can say that it is the source of jazz composing and arranging as we know it today. The large number of horns needed a score in order to create order of what would otherwise be a big mess. It is one thing listening and playing off other players when you are few people doing so, but when you have ten to thirteen musicians playing at once, it quickly makes sense that some of these ought to be doing the same thing in the same manner. In big bands, therefore, the horn section usually plays almost exactly what is written (see chapter 2, p.19–22). They follow the score in a similar way to that of the players in a classical orchestra, meaning that the horn players mostly play on LIF 1. Even though the soloist often is a part of the horn section, his role in the band will not be discussed here. This is because the horn section, as it is thought of here, not only reflects a certain kind of instrumentation, but also of the function it inhabits within the band. The soloist inherently plays with much greater individual freedom than the horn section, hence operating on different LIFs. This will be discussed in chapter 6.

Since the horns is the only section in the jazz orchestra where the musicians almost exclusively play on LIF 1, this is where Schneider can stay the most in control. Bear in mind, that the LIF-model is based on the levels of individual freedom that is common in a traditional large jazz ensemble setting, and also in Schneider's orchestra. It is always possible for the composer to make the players play exactly what she wants—but then we would be talking about a different kind of music all together.

The horns are the very essence of a big band, and therefore their function within it is diverse, but mostly based on rather simple composing techniques. From the very beginning it was common that the horns functioned as the first-line in the band playing melodic material in unison, octaves or in harmonies, often by the use of melodic subdivision between the different

sections. Other times all of the horns, or sections of the horns function as a supporting element playing accompanying figures or guide tone lines. Other techniques used are “call and response,” and the assigning of riffs to different sections of the band playing against each other. It has also become common to use different kinds of contrapuntal activity to support thematic ideas. Schneider often uses this technique.

Since this is a thesis about the incorporation of improvisation in the music of Maria Schneider, and not about the role of horns in big bands in general, it will center around how Schneider is able to use the horns to guide the music where she wants it to go. My main focus will be on the role of horns in the solo section itself drawing parallels and lines to the other sections of her work when it is relevant. The purpose of this is to demonstrate internal coherence in a particular piece. In Schneider’s music, and during the solo sections in particular, I find that the role of the horns can be divided into three main parts: Creating internal coherence by the use of thematic and motivic unity; creating variation and different atmospheres using different orchestrations; and the creation of forward motion as a result of orchestration, harmony the thematic material used. The first of these three aspects will be addressed in this chapter 3 and the second aspect, in chapter 4. Forward motion is something that will be integrated into several of the chapters, especially chapter 6, concerning the soloist.

One of the most important roles of Schneider’s musical enhancements is to connect the solo section to the rest of the musical structure, hence integrating the improvisation back into the written. One of her main tools for achieving this is basing the backgrounds of the solos on material previously presented in the piece. This is one of the most evident expressions for Schneider’s sense of economy, and one of the most important functions of the horns in the solo parts of her music.

There are numerous examples of how Schneider reuses material in this way, but as I mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will focus on *Choro Dançado*, *The Pretty Road* and *Wyrgly*. *Choro Dançado* is a good example of how Schneider creates coherence in her pieces, as almost the entire work is based on only three thematic ideas. *The Pretty Road* is interesting because Schneider introduces a small motive in its second solo section which emerges both as a link between the improvisation and the rest of the piece, but also as a structuring element. In *Wyrgly*, Schneider relies heavily on ostinatos and recurring bass figures to create thematic unity in addition to the fact that she uses a form of tone row composition to link sections together.

3.2 Choro Dançado

3.2.1 Introduction

The form of *Choro Dançado* revolves around two themes and their counterpoints (*A*, *B* and *S*). The solo sections in the piece are almost entirely based on this thematic material. Since Schneider's music is through composed, the main thematic material becomes important elements when attempting to create internal coherence in the piece. This means that while the solo section itself is often based on new harmonic progressions, the resurfacing of thematic material in the musical enhancements played by the horns creates the linking elements that in more traditional big band arrangements are found in the rhythm section. The following analysis will track the use of the thematic material in *Choro Dançado* in addition to give an explanation for *how* they work in the different contexts. Underneath follows a table giving a brief overview of the piece (fig.3.1.).

This form overview is based on several criteria. In the rough overview presented below, I have chosen to focus mainly on ensemble sections versus solo sections. It hence, becomes a matter of orchestration. In this sense the division of the piece faces little controversy. However, I have chosen to include eight measures at the end of the piano solo where the piano is no longer improvising. This is due to the fact that the melodic line placed in the foreground of the texture feels like a continuation of the improvisation, something in which is emphasized by the piano doubling the flute and the clarinet playing it.

Part	I	II	III	IV
Measures	1–88	89–196	197–228	229–320
Description	Presentation of thematic material <i>A</i> , <i>B</i> and <i>S</i>	Tenor solo. <i>Section IIa:</i> Musical enhancements built on <i>A</i> (mm. 88–119) <i>Section IIb:</i> Musical enhancements built on <i>B</i> (mm. 152–196)	Piano solo. Musical enhancements are again mainly built on <i>A</i> (mm.197–212) and <i>B</i> (mm. 213–228)	Recapitulation of thematic material. Small tenor solo (mm. 253–256).

Figure 3.1. Form overview

3.2.2 The main thematic material

As can be seen from the form overview of section I (fig. 3.2), *Choro Dançado* is an AABBAABBAA type form. It is, however, also a fact that the thematic material is always varied in some way, either rhythmically, by changing the intervals of the melody or both. In addition Schneider introduces contrapuntal lines to the theme every other time it is presented to the listener. This section will give an overview of the main thematic material (A and B) and one of the contrapuntal lines (S) that surface in section I. In addition I will give an account of the main groove patterns found in this piece, as this also serves as a linking element in the composition. This is material that is highly important to Schneider's development of the piece and to the integration of the solo section with the rest of the composition. Material that is not important seen from this perspective will not be discussed here.

The first melodic idea of the piece, A (here represented by A_1 , fig.3.3) is characterized by a general sense of descending motion. The floating character of the line is given forward motion by the 16th notes that also become a characteristic feature of the melody. It is divided into two three-measure phrases (a_1 and b_1), and going from A^3 to C^5 , it has a relatively large range.

The first phrase, a_1 , begins with an almost entirely stepwise descending scale which is interrupted by an octave leap in measure 2 before it continues to descend in the same manner. Phrase b_1 continues in much the same way, a stepwise descending motion, but its rhythmic character feels more angular because of the more frequent use of sixteenth notes in combination with several instances of auxiliary tones. This becomes a slight contrast to the more floating feel of a_1 , where the note values generally are longer in addition to it containing a triplet that helps stretch it out. The presence of sixteenth notes in combination with the use of auxiliary tones give an impression of sequencing the thematic material, which creates unity between the two phrases. This is also a feature that contributes to the Latin feel of the piece.

The tonal quality of b is slightly different from a in that it seems to be moving away from C Aeolian into a mode of harmonic minor. The pitches B^3 and A^3 in the last measure are no longer the *minor* sixth and *minor* seventh of the scale, but rather the *major* sixth and the *major* seventh.

being able to use a major dominant chord in the last measure before section B_2 , something in which contributes to the escalation of tension.



Figure 3.4. Thematic material B_1 , mm. 17–22

As already mentioned, there is an additional melodic idea that will become important in integrating the solo sections into the larger structure of the piece. While A and B are to be considered the primary thematic material of *Choro Dançado*, Schneider creates a number of contrapuntal lines that accompany these melodic ideas. This both creates variation and helps with the dynamics of the piece. Below I will present just one of these lines, seeing as this line is the only one that is relevant for the solo sections. This line will be called S (secondary melody), indicating that although this is a new melodic line, it is of a secondary character throughout most of the piece.

What characterizes S (see fig. 3.5.) is first and foremost the fact that it is significantly more rhythmically and melodically complex than both A and B . The first time it is presented to the listener is in measures 51–56, and it is played alongside the B_4 thematic material. It is the simplicity of B_4 that makes it possible to combine it with the more complex S .

There are several features that decide the rhythmic complexity of S . Firstly; there is the fact that it is a faster melodic line than both A and B . This is due to it mostly consisting of eighth notes and triplets. The theme is made bouncy with the presence of staccato accents on some of the notes. The melodic line itself further emphasizes this bounciness.

The melodic contour of this contrapuntal line, is a marked contrast to both A and B in that it contains many big leaps. This is, in addition to the melody's rhythmic distribution, the most characteristic feature of S . The very first interval in the line is a minor sixth followed by two triplets of stepwise descent. In the next measures leaps of intervals such as minor sixths and diminished sevenths appear frequently. This mixture of great leaps and stepwise descent creates a melodic line that almost feels improvised. In a traditional big band setting, this might have been a line typically played in a saxophone soli. This quality of the thematic material will be of great importance when creating coherence between section III (the piano solo) and section IV (the final section) of the piece as it recurs in measures 221–228. This will be discussed at further length in chapter 5.2.1. (p. 85).



Figure 3.5. S, contrapuntal line to B₄, mm. 51–56

Apart from the purely melodic, there is in fact another element that helps bind this piece together. The “choro-groove” that is present already from the composition’s first measure permeates the entire composition. The main variant of this groove (“choro-groove 1”) is demonstrated in figure 3.6.a. It is a one-measure rhythmic pattern. It is constantly played off-beat, but a use of the piano pedal on the offbeats in the latter half of the measure makes the last half slightly tougher than the first. The pedal-use makes the groove *sound* more like figure 3.6.b. In some cases, however, the entire pattern is played staccato, making the groove a little more bouncy.

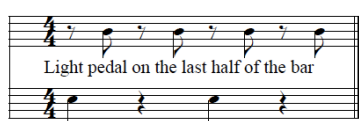


Figure 2.6.a. Rhythmic representation of “choro-groove 1” (as written)

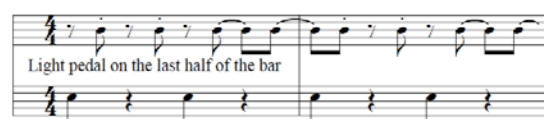


Figure 2.6.b Rhythmic representation of “choro-groove 1” (as performed)

To contrast the staccato character of the choro-groove represented by figures 3.6, Schneider has created several variants of the pattern using syncopated sustained notes (see fig. 3.7). Looking only at the attack of the notes, it becomes clear that “choro-groove 2” (fig. 3.7.) is a variant of “choro groove 1” (fig. 3.6a). It is created to fit the different moods of the piece and to make variation. The sustained and versions of the “choro-groove” (fig. 3.7) sound more contemplative and floating. The two versions of the groove are used interchangeably with great success in section IIa (tenor solo).



Figure. 3.7. Rhythmic representation of “choro-groove 2”

3.2.3 Section IIa: The tenor solo part 1

Choro Dançado has three separate solo sections. The first and longest of the three is the tenor solo (fig. 3.8.). It runs from measure 88 to through 196, which constitutes a little over a third of the entire composition. The piano solo enters at measure 197 and ends in measure 220. A second short tenor solo is introduced in section III of the composition. Although different in length, the two first solos, can in many ways be seen as parallels to each other. This will be demonstrated in the analyses below.

The tenor solo is organized by a harmonic pattern of 3 X 4 measures modal planes moving around the circle of fifths, mainly in the mode of *Phrygian major third* (also known as the *Phrygian dominant scale*). This is a mode that contains the combination of a major third interval with the distinctive minor second interval from the Phrygian mode creating a characteristic exotic sound commonly found in Greek, Turkish, Jewish, Arab and Flamenco music. These rather harmonically static planes are played on top of “choro-groove 2” (see fig. 3.7.) and are contrasted by short passages of “choro-groove 1” (from now on called the “choro-parts,” see fig. 3.6.a) that modulates in a circle of its own according to the chord tones in a D diminished chord (see fig. 3.9.). In figure 3.9, the color green marks the static planes moving around the circle of fifths, while pink represents the “choro-parts” moving up a D diminished chord. In this section we will look closer at the modal planes where Schneider chooses to introduce short 4-measure phrases built on the thematic material of A (see fig. 3.3. (A) and fig. 3.8 (form overview)).

Measures	Description
88–99	Descending lines (A material)
100–103	First choro part. Musical enhancement: pedal tone on the third.
104–115	Descending lines (A material) + accompaniment in horns
116–119	Choro-part. Pedal tone on the third.
120–135	No backgrounds. Structured in same way as the above sections
136–147	Brightening of modes. Backgrounds are pads.

Figure 3.8. Form overview of section IIa

m. 88 Emmaj7(b13)				m. 92 Esus7(b9b13)			
m. 96 A Phryg mai 3 rd				m. 100 Dm			
m. 104 D Phryg Mai 3 rd				m. 108 G Phryg mai 3 rd			
m. 112 C Phryg. Mai. 3 rd				m. 116 Fm			
m. 120 F Phryg Maj 3 rd				m. 124 Bb Phryg Maj 3 rd			
m. 128 Eb Phryg Maj 3 rd				m. 132 Abm			
m. 136 Ab sus7 b13				m. 140 Db sus 13			
m. 144 Gb sus13				m. 148 Bm			

Figure 3.9. Harmonic guide to section IIa

The first tenor solo begins like a subtle form of trading between certain instruments in the ensemble and the soloist. Descending lines created from the A-material, are set up to give the soloist a general feel of the character of this section (see fig. 3.10.).



Comparing the phrase a_2 in measure 88 with the first introduction of A_1 , one notices that the first three pitches are identical to one another, taking into consideration the change of key. The variation is found in the rhythmic treatment of the melody fragment. Where A_1 alternates between staccato quarter notes and quarter rests, a_2 consists of sustained pitches in a stepwise descent. By removing the rests and accents in A_1 , prolonging the rhythmic value of the third and fourth note in the theme at the same time as keeping the characteristic sixteenth notes, Schneider creates a phrase that is both part of a descending scale and reminiscent of A_1 . Its

new legato character makes the phrase sound softer and less intrusive than A at the same time as it emphasizes the new tonality of the solo section.

This four-measure-phrase is repeated four times during these first opening measures and can be described as a form of melodic subdivision. I find that the general sense of descending motion in contrast to the static nature of the modal planes and the use of “choro-grove 2” creates suspense in addition contrasting the climax of the previous section. The fact that the last two measures of these phrases generally are long suspended notes creates space for the soloist in addition to giving him material that he can react to. In the score, the soloist is invited to create “simple answers” (Schneider 2011d: 12). during these initial long suspended notes, and to “hold” when there is greater activity in the backgrounds. As will be demonstrated in chapter 6, this form of trading is slowly loosened up because the soloist relates himself more freely to these phrases as the piece develops.

The example in the appendix (p. 129) demonstrates that there does not seem to be any specific kind of logic pattern as to the starting points of these descending lines, except for the fact that it is always a chord tone. What is apparent, however, is that four out of the five phrases ends on the third. This is in line with the musical enhancements found elsewhere in this section. In the choro-parts, for instance, the musical enhancements consist of a single sustained note in unison throughout its four measures. This is always the third in the prevailing key. When sustained chords become the backgrounds from measure 136, the top note is again on the third. In addition one can see that the descending lines emphasise chord tones, and notes that are characteristic for the different keys, such as the b9, b7 and b13. It becomes clear that these lines give a great deal of harmonic information to the improviser in addition to providing him with target notes in which he can aim for when he plays. This means that he can play more freely in between these target notes than what perhaps would have been possible had the musical enhancements been less clear harmonically. It is then quite possible to characterize these descending lines as embellished guide tone lines, something which is a common composing tool in jazz arranging and composing. The simplicity and clarity of this idea however, and the reuse of material gives the piece an extra dimension that helps bind everything together in a coherent manner.

3.2.4 Section IIb: The tenor solo part 2

The second section of the tenor solo is organized around the material from *B* and involves, dynamically speaking, a climb. As mentioned earlier, *B* is characterized by a stepwise ascent with note repetitions. Schneider begins introducing *B* in small packages consisting of rhythmized fragments of the melodic idea much in the same way as she does in section IIa of the solo. In this section, however, she builds on the theme and eventually introduces variants of it in its entirety, in fact it is even prolonged (see fig 3.11).

Measures	Description
152–167	Motifs from <i>B</i> with gaps of air (variant of melodic subdivision).
168–196	<i>B</i> melody introduced in its entirety. Backgrounds include accompanimental figures.

Figure 3.11. Form overview, section IIb.

In measure 154 Schneider introduces a fragment of *B* for the first time since the introductory passages of the piece. Pitchwise it is identical to *B*₁, following the pattern of stepwise ascent and note repetition (see fig. 3.4 (*B*) and fig. 3.12. (excerpt from *B*₂)). However, just like she did with the *A* material, Schneider moves away from staccatoed quarter notes and quarter rests and creates a guide tone line of sustained pitches moving from B⁴ to D⁵.



Figure 3.12. Section IIb. Excerpt from *B*₂, mm.152–155

Instead of sequencing the material like she does in section IIa, Schneider uses the 16 first measures of this part to transition into a full blown variant of *B*. The transition consists of a fragmented variant of *B*₁, where the material is prolonged by separating it into shorter phrases divided by measures containing rests in the time signatures 2/4 and 4/4 respectively (see end of fig. 3.12. for an example of this). These small amounts of air in combination with the sustained notes help create the drop in dynamic intensity that occurs between Section IIa and IIb. The ascending nature of the material, however, also gives the section suspense and forward motion.

In measures 156–158, Schneider moves slightly away from the original theme of *B* by using shorter fragments of it repeated twice; B⁴—C^{#5}, then Bb⁴—B⁴. This contributes to making the

connection to *B* less obvious, but still carries clear similarities to the original melodic idea. A third fragment of *B* is introduced in measure 160 that is identical to *B*_I in pitch, but differs rhythmically. The fact that this fragment is delayed by a quarter note makes it *feel* somewhat syncopated, although it is not. This is not only a source of nuanced variation, but also helps give the piece a slight nudge in the direction that it is headed.

The last melodic fragment is reminiscent of the second phrase in *B*_I in that it too is a variant of the stepwise ascending line found in the first half of *B*_I. Like in *B*_I (see fig. 3.4 (*B*_I) and fig. 3.13), one can look at the target notes of the phrase, and detect that the line moves stepwise in the following manner: D⁵–E⁵–E⁵–F⁵ which is in keeping with the motivic material from *B*_I moving in stepwise ascent and note repetitions.

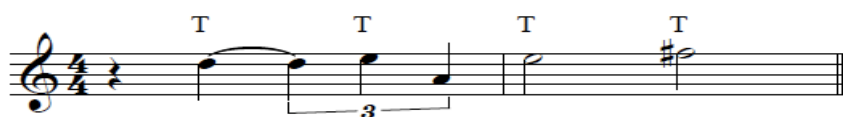


Figure 3.13. Section IIb, mm. 164–165

After this transitional passage, Schneider introduces three passages of the entire *B*-theme, successively (see fig. 3.14). The first begins in measure 168 and has the starting pitch F⁴ and ends on a G⁵. The next introduction of the idea travels from a G⁴ to an Eb⁵ (fig. 3.14, m. 176). However, looking at and listening to the octave doubling in the flute, one gets the impression that *B* continues from G⁵ to Eb,⁶ which contributes highly to the dynamic development of the piece. The last measures of the tenor solo is a third variation of *B* beginning on a C⁴ achieving its climax in measure 188 where it reaches a G⁶ in the flute and a G⁵ in the trumpets. This is not, however, the top of the ascent. The line reaches its highest pitch in measure 189, on an A⁶.



Figure. 3.14. Musical enhancements, B material, section IIb

What prevents the highest pitch in the piece from coinciding with the section's climax, is that a descending scale in the trumpet and the bass clarinet creates a sense of calming down, an orchestral diminuendo that is continued throughout this final part of the tenor solo. The fact that there is a continued overall ascending motion placed underneath the tenor solo between measure 188 and 189, contributes greatly to the dynamic development of the piece. Not only does the actual sound get louder by the use of orchestral crescendo and notation of the dynamics, but the ascending nature of the thematic material makes you feel as if the piece is moving upwards and forward.

The rhythmization of *B* is very important for the dynamic development of this piece in addition to the above-mentioned features. First and foremost, this is due to the way each of the passages begins. Looking at figure 3.14, one detects that the rhythmic values of the first note in each of the *B* sections are increased successively. What this does to the larger context of the piece, is that it creates emphasis and makes each entrance feel slower and heavier. This emphasizes the sense of a climb in addition to underlining the crescendo that runs through this part. The dynamics of the piece is further nuanced by the fact that there is a dynamic drop between each of the *B* passages creating renewed tension; a sense of holding back that together with the prolonged notes in the background produces a weighty feel that helps enlarge the texture and sound of the piece. It creates a certain kind of resistance to all the other parameters that seems to be moving forward or upward without disturbing the understanding between the orchestra, improviser and listener that we know where this is going, that the piece is on its way to a climax. In order to display the rhythmic variants of *B*, I have displayed each entrance of it underneath each other in figure 3.14.

3.2.5 Section III: The piano solo

As mentioned earlier, Maria Schneider wishes that her compositions surprise the audience at the same time as what is happening should feel inevitable. This is something that is demonstrated in *Choro Dançado*, and something that becomes clearer when looking at the second solo section of the piece, the piano solo (see fig. 3. 15). In this solo Schneider moves away from the darker modes of the previous parts of the piece and into G Ionian, or G major. The resulting brightness of atmosphere is emphasized by the choice of soloist as there is a crispness to the piano that is hard to find elsewhere in the ensemble. The surprise, hence, partly lies in the change of mode. What keeps this section bound together with the previous parts, however, is the fact that it is structured much in the same way as the tenor solo. The

first sixteen measures is ornamented with musical enhancements that are reminiscent of A_1 and hence also of the distribution of the A material in the first part of the tenor solo. The latter part introduces rhythmized versions of B in addition to some of the previously presented counterpoints.

Measures	Description
197–212	Mode is brightened to G major. Motifs from A reintroduced–varied slightly. Generally falling gestures.
213–220	Texture type III: Additive structure consisting of an ostinato in the trumpets and a contrapuntal line in top woodwinds. Introduces G Lydian to the section and sparks off chromaticism in the pianist’s play.
221–228	Still texture type III: Secondary melody. Piano joins flute and clarinet in S (primary melody), The secondary melody from the previous measures continues, so does the ostinato.

Figure 3.15. Form overview, section III

Looking closer at the first section of the piano solo, one notices that although reminiscent of A , the melodic fragments are much more loosely tied to the original melodic material than those in the tenor solo section. The descending lines in Section IIa resemble A_1 in pitch for the first two measures of the fragment. In the piano solo section, the fragments are only identical to A_1 in the first measure. In many ways, one can claim that the descending lines of the piano solo section are indirectly tied to A_1 through the descending lines in the tenor section. This is because the similarity of the rhythmic distribution of the A -fragments in the both the piano and tenor solo. It is also true that both fragment-types have a generally descending character, although in the piano solo they do not follow a strict stepwise descent (see fig. 3.16. and 3.17). As seen by figure 3.16, the rhythmical difference between a_2 and a_7 is that the sixteenth notes in a_2 are replaced by an eight note in a_7 .

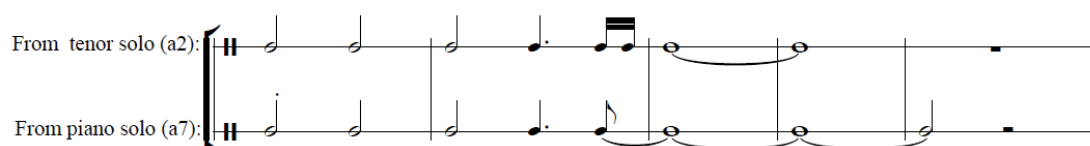


Figure 3.16. Section III: Rhythmic juxtaposition of thematic material in Section IIa and IIIa

Another feature creating variation between the two parts is the distribution of roles between the musical enhancements and the soloist. In the tenor section, there was a subtle form of trading between the descending lines and the soloist, in fact the soloist was instructed to react

to these lines. The melodic subdivision in the piano solo does to an even greater extent feel like *one* melody, perhaps largely due to its conversational character. The first and third phrase can be distinguished as a form of call while the second replies. This is emphasized by the orchestration of the fragments and the fact that the latter line always ends on the fundamental in the key (G in G Ionian). The darker texture of the woodwinds sets up against the brightness of the trumpets, coupled with the feeling of coming home on the last pitch of the phrase, creates a form of conclusiveness that contributes to the conversational feel in the internal structure of the musical enhancements. This further allows the improviser to play more freely as there is something that independently makes sense in the background.



Figure 3.17. Section III: Call and response between melodic fragments a_7 and a_8 .

There is no doubt that from measure 213 onwards (see fig. 3.18), the texture thickens. At first glance, this seems quite complex, and it is easy to assume that the different elements are all textural layers, mistaking the line found in the trumpet, for instance, for a secondary melody. My assessment of these measures, however, is that the line found in the trumpets (C1) and the lines in the trombones, bass clarinet, voice and rhythm section (C2) are both part of the accompaniment alongside with the pedal tone (C3). Adding the secondary melody in the flute and clarinet to the texture, in addition to the soloist, makes this a texture consisting of three elements: Primary melody (A-excluded from fig. 3.18), secondary melody (B) and accompaniment (C), i.e. Piston's texture type III, *secondary melody* (see chapter 2.3 p. 32). The reason why I am mentioning this here, is that all elements in this texture seems to be reminiscent of B_I , even though it might not be easily detectable to the listener. Looking at element C2 in figure 3.18, one can see that the stepwise ascending motion of B is present in the first measure of what can be described as an ostinato. This ostinato repeats itself every two bars, and is shaped as a wave, or arch. The second measure of the ostinato is what separates it from most of the other appearances of the thematic material of B , as it descends after the ascent in the first bar. The ostinato in the trumpets is a prolonged variation of C2. It repeats itself every four measures, rather than every other measure. What should be noticed, though, is that the trumpets are successively entering the texture playing this ostinato, every other measure, creating contrary motion (see fig 3.18). There is a small canon going on inside the

accompaniment. The emphasis on the waveform in this section, contrasted by the secondary melody and the solo, creates a form of restless tension.

Figure 3.18. mm. 213–216

The secondary melody found in the flutes and clarinet is not easily tracked to any form of thematic material. However, looking at the following measures (mm. 221–228, see fig. 5.1, p. 85), it becomes clear that this melody is indirectly tied to *B*-material. The rhythmic distribution of the secondary melody in mm. 213–220 is very similar to that of the melody found in mm. 221–228, and this melody is closer tied to *B*. This relationship is something that creates a subtle form of coherence that might only be detected subconsciously, if at all by the listener. It does take a certain measure of analysis to detect the similarities.

Harmonically, this is where the soloist begins playing chromatically after having played diatonically in G Ionian for the first part of the solo. Schneider writes that the soloist should begin playing chromatically at this point, but it might also be spurred on by the fact that C# is introduced into the harmonic setting, meaning that the mode is being brightened from G Ionian to G Lydian. Modes are often categorized by their relative brightness/darkness. The more whole steps there are in a scale, the brighter the mode, and vice versa. This means that in a modal context, Lochrian will be the darkest mode and Lydian, the brightest (Naus 1998:78)

I earlier spoke of how I have placed measures 221–228 as part of the piano solo. In order to avoid an overlap, however, I will discuss these measures in chapter 5 (p. 85)

3.2.6 mm. 253-61: The second tenor solo

During Section IV of *Choro Dançado*, Schneider introduces a brief sixteen measures long tenor solo section. This section is a contrast to the rest of the piece as it has a very rough and dark character which is gradually brightened throughout its course. In many ways, one can say that its mere occurrence helps integrate both tenor solos because the renewed presence of the tenor saxophone points back to the first solo. This is further emphasized by the continued reuse of previously presented material balanced with the new sound displayed during these sixteen measures. The way in which Schneider gradually reveals the presence of the *B*-material will be discussed in chapter 4 in order to avoid overlapping.

3.2.7 Concluding comments

The analysis above gives an example of how Schneider takes advantage of previously written material to create coherence and a sense of development in her music. There are many other examples of this in her catalog, using different techniques with the ultimate goal of achieving more or less the same thing. In *The Pretty Road*, Schneider introduces a small motive in the second solo section of the piece which works both as a link between the solo sections and the rest of the piece, but also a structuring unit as one of the solo sections moves from a place with no sense of time into a space with a groove placed underneath the melody. *Wyrgly* on the other hand does not possess as clearly developed thematic ideas, but a groove pattern that is embellished on, in addition to a saxophone line in one of the introductory of the piece, creates the foundation for much of what is going on there.

3.3 The Pretty Road

The Pretty Road is a little different from *Choro Dançado* in that its first solo section is based on an entirely new harmonic progression without any musical enhancements picking up on previously presented material (see chapter 5). The solo in this case, functions as a bridge to the second solo section, almost impressionistic in style where Schneider attempts to paint a picture of sound representing her childhood town. She paints this picture by introducing a number of motifs that are meant to represent sounds reminding her of her childhood. Some of these motifs are pure imitations of actual sounds, others require some interpretation or background knowledge to understand. This type of texture, is called *tapestry of sound*

(chapter 2.3, p.32). What is interesting in this context is that through this outdoor-sounding landscape Schneider presents the listener with what becomes the third main musical idea of the piece, what is written out in the score as the “Hokey-motif.”

The form overview for *The Pretty Road* (fig. 3.19) was constructed along much the same lines as the one for *Choro Dançado*. The piece is divided into sections that each have a distinct sound. The sections coincide with the double bar lines found in the score. There was little controversy deciding on the form of the piece. Section V could have been included in section IV, but since there is a marked change of character here I chose to regard it as a separate entity resembling a coda.

Part	Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV	Section V
Measures	mm. 1–86	mm. 87–185	mm. 186–192	mm. 206–259	mm. 260–285
Description	Melody presentation (2X). Each section consists of two themes, A and B.	Flugelhorn solo. New harmonic progression–Modulation and harmonic rhythm structures the section.	Flugelhorn solo continued. Open time feel. “Hokey-motif” introduced.	Recapitulation of themes in a new way. Synthesis of previous elements.	Outro/Coda. Resembles Section III in character, but the bass keeps time.

Figure 3.19. Form Overview

3.3.1 The “Hokey-motif” and the organization of section III

The “Hokey-motif” is based on one of Schneider’s many prominent childhood memories. It is supposed to signify the mother of one of her childhood friends calling her daughter’s name out into the streets. The first syllable would be spoken in a low register while the second ended the call in a high one: “Hoheeee!” Most would of course be oblivious to the exact meaning of this little piece of thematic material, unless being made aware of it one way or another. However, any listener would with repeated listening to the piece understand that this element gradually becomes a major linking element between the improvisation and the rest of the piece. The chapters 3.3.2. and onwards will attempt to track the way this third musical

idea manifests itself in the piece and how it in the end contributes to incorporate the improvisation into the larger structure of the piece.

What characterizes the “Hokey-motif” (see fig. 3.20) is not a set interval or rhythm, but the very presence of a big leap. This is combined with the fact that the latter note tends to be longer than the first and that these notes are commonly syncopated. It should be noted that the “Hokey-motif” often appears in sections where there is no set time.



Figure 3.20. The “Hokey-motif” (see fig. 3.21. for “Hokey-motif” in context)

Before venturing into any further analysis I find it necessary to give a quick overview of the structuring of Section III in *The Pretty Road*. Without having the score itself in front of you, which would be of a great advantage in any case when reading this, it is difficult to understand the written and perhaps also the performed organization of this section.

Section III is, as mentioned earlier written in free time. Its total length is three minutes and sixteen seconds, corresponding to almost 24% of the total length of the piece. It is, however, organized into only seven measures (mm. 186–192), which means that each measure in average lasts for little over 45 seconds. That is an unusually long amount of time.

The way this section works is that each measure represents a certain orchestration or texture where small motifs are distributed among the musicians. When the players are to change motifs, either internally or by introducing new material, a new measure is introduced. It is, in short, a way for the musicians and the conductor to keep track of what is happening in a long passage that involves a lot of freedom. Maria Schneider will under a concert introduce the different elements at the time she feels it is right, as if they are the keys, buttons or strings on some large instrument. In a way, she becomes the second soloist in the section that also continues to feature Ingrid Jensen on the flugelhorn (*Sky Blue* 2007). In addition, it seems that her players get a certain amount of freedom in this section as she has explained that what she finds is the most important factor when playing this type of music, is that the musicians get familiar with it, so that “they are hearing and listening to the music before they respond to it”

(Schneider 2007b). It is also a fact that what is written in the score does not correspond completely with what is being played.

This section is an excellent example of when notation can be a helpful device, but not by far be a complete representation of what is being performed musically. Underneath I have included one of the measures from section III for the sake of clarity (fig. 3.21).

The "Pretty" Road - Concert Insert 2

The musical score excerpt shows measures 188 and 191. Measure 188 is marked with a box containing '188' and a bracketed '3'. It features a Flute/Clarinet (Fl/Ct) staff with a melodic line, and Tenor Saxophones (Tbn 1&3) playing a 'Hokey!' motif. Measure 191 is marked with a box containing '191' and a bracketed '2'. It shows Tbn 1&3 'In & Out' and Tbn 2 playing a similar motif. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'can pick diff note' and 'BASS CONT.'.

Figure 3.21. Excerpt from Section III (Schneider 2011c:28 (concert incert))

3.3.2 mm. 188 and 191: Introducing the “Hokey-motif”

The first appearance of the Hokey-motif occurs in measure 188 (see fig. 3.21). It is given a protruding place in the musical texture. This is achieved by the fact that the other motifs are quieted down creating an anticipatory atmosphere. The motif itself is reminiscent of trumpet fanfares only that while fanfares tend to be in fortissimo and in fourths and fifths, the Hokey-motif is performed by the softer sounding tenor saxophones, in addition to being spoken in both tenths, elevenths and twelfth's. Interestingly enough, three different saxophones play these three initial introductions of the Hokey-motif successively. The motif is placed in a warm range on the instrument and is given the color of each individual's timbre. Somehow, I find that this gives life to the phrase to the extent that it almost feels human. The soloist's response to this phrase is touched upon in chapter 6.

The second appearance of the motif is found in measure 191. Here it is written in a slightly different way rhythmically, the motif begins with an eighth note (see fig. 3.22). The actual

significance of this change in rhythm is difficult to assess without actually hearing it played. Listening to the track on *Sky Blue* (2007) it seems that the first introduction of the theme is played slightly more legato with a little more weight on the first of the two notes. The difference is subtle. In addition to this small rhythmic variation, the role of the “Hokey-motif” in the overall texture is altered. It is no longer in the foreground, but placed further back, behind the improvisation and some of the other motifs. I can think of at least one reason for this. It is not unusual to make the first introduction of a musical element stand out in order to make the listener aware of its presence. When the motif resurfaces later in the piece, it will have all the more impact because the listener remembers it, whether it be consciously or unconsciously. The initial entrance of the motif hence becomes a foreshadowing of what will happen later in the piece.

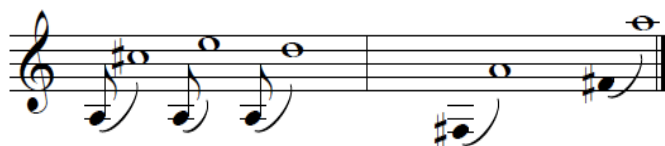


Figure 3.22. “Hokey-motif,” m. 191.

3.3.3 mm. 197–205: The “Hokey-motif” as a structuring element

In measure 197 the “Hokey-motif” regains its prominent position and is given a role as both transitory theme and structuring unit. As mentioned earlier section III is played in free time. During the measures 197–205 however, nearly the entire ensemble plays the “Hokey-motif” in a homophonic way. In the measures 197–205, hence, some kind of order must have been introduced. In this section the element of order is the conductor, not the establishing of set time. The simultaneous execution of the “hokey-motif”, does however, make it feel as if there is a *sense* of time, that the music is a little more structured. Ingrid Jensen continues to improvise through this entire interlude (mm. 197–(206) 209).

The full ensemble playing the “Hokey-motif” simultaneously makes for a great contrast to the previous section where the entire ensemble engages in collective improvisation given the cues “Everyone A-Ionian- like chatter. Start high and active---slowly lower and softer” (Schneider 2011c: 4 (concert insert)). This means that the piece has moved from a place of order to a

place of chaos. And from measure 197–205, Schneider gradually begins reintroducing this sense of order.

3.3.4 mm. 206 and onwards: The “Hokey-groove”

In measure 206, time finally enters with the pianist who sets up the groove that will be the foundation for the first part of Section IV. This groove just happens to be a camouflaged version of the “Hokey-motif” (see fig. 3.23). This little figure is again inserted at a crucial moment in the composition, and once again it has altered its function in the texture. Going from being a primary element (m. 188), to a secondary one (m. 192), to a primary element again (mm. 197–205) and now the basis for a groove pattern (mm. 206 onwards (sporadic appearances)).

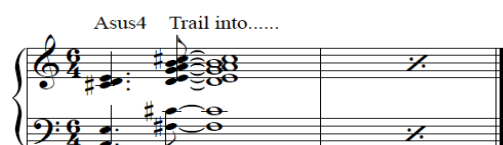


Figure 3.23. “Hokey-groove,” m. 206–207

3.3.5 Section IV: Synthesis of thematic material

The introduction of the “Hokey-groove” in measure 206, is the beginning of section IV, which can be described as the ensemble section or finale of the composition. In addition to reestablishing time, this part of the piece reintroduces the main thematic material alongside the “Hokey-motif”. Therefore section IV can be seen as a symbiosis of previously presented material. The continued presence of the “Hokey-motif” and the “Hokey-groove” further helps integrate the improvisation into the rest of the composition by providing a “missing link” between the sections. Although the primary thematic material *A* and *B* (see fig. 3.25 (*B*)) are not represented in the solo sections, the synthesis of these three ideas in section IV creates coherence. This begins with a variation of *A*₁ (see fig. 3.24) in the upbeat to measure 210 over the “Hokey-groove” that established time in measure 206.



Figure 3.24. Thematic material A.



Figure 3.25. B_1 and contrapuntal line to B .

From measure 217 until measure 235, the “Hokey-motif” disappears entirely. However, in the measures before this, there has been rhythmic motion in the rhythm section that is reminiscent of the “Hokey-groove,” even though the big melodic leap is no longer there. I believe the reason behind this is that the “Hokey-motif” has at this point in the composition become so established, that the mere presence of its syncopated rhythm points back to the previous parts of the piece, reminding the listener of where it comes from.

It therefore has a rather dramatic effect and is of great dynamic importance when the “Hokey-motif” re-enters in measure 235 in soprano saxophone and the larger parts of the brass section alongside a variant of A_1 (see fig. 3.26). At this point in the composition, it is difficult to assess whether the “Hokey-motif” is an accompanying figure, a secondary melody, or even a primary melody. No matter what function, it does help lift the piece onto another level dynamically speaking at the same time as it is reminiscent of the last time the “Hokey-motif” appeared as this kind of forceful element (measure 199). The fact that the first note of the theme has been elongated helps contribute to the motif feeling heavier and more forceful (see fig. 3.26.).



Figure 3.26. Hokey motif and a variant of A , mm.237–238

3.3.6 Concluding comments

Although not directly focusing purely on the solo section in which it appears, this section of the thesis shows how Schneider is able to introduce a new thematic idea into a solo section that is very different from the rest of the piece, before venturing to apply it as both a structuring element in the composition in addition to an element of integration. The first function emerges through the use of the motif as something bringing the music from a section that is almost in a state of disintegration into a new section where order and time is reestablished. In short, it functions as an element bringing everything together again, almost as a form of glue or the nuts, bolts and screws of a machine. The motif's other function, that of integration, becomes quite evident when looking at how Schneider reintroduces this new idea in combination with the main themes presented in the first section of the piece. The actual symbiosis of three elements that has each been presented in separate parts of the piece ties it all together and helps give even the open-time second solo section a sense of direction in the larger structure of the work where the "Hokey-motif" works as a foreshadowing of the climax that follows in the final sections of the piece.

3.4 *Wyrgly*

The form overview below is partly based on the form overview of *Wyrgly* found in Alex Stewart's book *Making the Scene. Contemporary New York City Big Band Music* (2007). This is quite simply because I found his idea of naming the second thematic idea A, a very good solution looking at the distribution of the thematic material in the piece. Schneider herself has explained how she composed the lyrical part of *Wyrgly* before the introduction of the piece, and that she finally "realized that she could use the reed line of the slow section as a tone row for the beginning and later in the piece again" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:xii). The first thing the listener hears is therefore a thematic adaptation of A_I . In Stewart's form overview, the piece is only divided into sections labeled with measure numbers and the letters A and B. I use Roman numerals. Both mine and Stewart's overview have been divided into nine sections. I debated whether or not section II and III and VI and VII should be merged into only two separate sections. This is because the material found in section II and VI transition into section III and VI. However, I chose to keep them separated for three reasons: Firstly, Schneider's playfulness with time, secondly the fact that both A-material and B-material are

present at the same time in these sections, and thirdly because section VI marks the end of the tenor solo. Deciding on the rest of the form was relatively unproblematic (see fig. 3.27).

Section I	Section II	Section III	Section IV
Measures 1–66	measures 67–91	Measures 92–106	Measures 106–206
'opening sonorities' (Stewart) (based on material from Room 4) (A)	Transition to shuffle (two time signatures)	Boogie-woogie/ shuffle (B)	Lyrical part (A)

Section V	Section VI	Section VII	Section VIII	Section IX
Measures 127–160 (first part is open)	Measures 161–169	Measures 170–189 (open, first part)	Measures 190–223	Measures 224–fade out.
Tenor solo (based on A thematic material)	Double time interlude (two time signatures)	Boogie-woogie trombone solo- based on B-material	Boogie Guitar solo. Backgrounds throughout. (B)	Ending Boogie + sonorities Sparse. Fade out. (BA)- synthesis.

Figure 3.27. Form overview

3.4.1 Thematic material

In *Wyrgly*, three elements are important when looking at the way Schneider integrates the improvisation back into the written. Two of them can be found in their original form in section IV where the A material is presented. These two elements consists of the saxophone line presented in measures 109–126 (see fig. 3.28 p. 62) and of a short chord progression that directly precedes section IV in addition to being the harmonic foundation for the last eight measures of the section (see fig. 3.29 p.62). This chord progression will be used as a linking and structuring element throughout the piece in addition to being a means of prolonging the A-material. As already mentioned, the saxophone line is used as a tone row that forms the basis for both the introduction, the transitional sections and some of the musical enhancements later on in the piece. The third feature that becomes important for the integration of the solo section into the larger structure of the piece is the *boogie-woogie*

walking bass (B). This rhythmically vibrant line permeates the larger parts of the composition and is realized in several different ways in the score.

Considering the A-material, there is one important thing to discuss, and that is the use of the term *tone row*, especially bearing in mind the sections of the piece that will be focused on here. In *Oxford Music Online*, a tone row⁸ is defined as

An ordered succession of elements to be used as basic material in a composition. The term is most frequently applied to an ordering of the 12 pitch classes, but it may also be used of a succession of fewer or more than 12 pitch classes, or of successions of pitches, durations, dynamics, time points, timbres and so on (*Oxford Music Online* 2012).

Looking at this definition, it seems suitable to be speaking of Schneider's use of tone row composition for at least parts of the piece. Traditionally speaking, however, tone rows can be presented in four different ways: *Prime* (P) (in its original form), *inversion* (I) (intervals of the original row are inverted), *retrograde* (R) (the row is played backwards) and *retrograde inversion* (the intervals in the row are inverted *and* played backwards) (Griffiths 2012).

Looking at Schneider's use of the tone row, however, the main sources of variation is rhythm and octave displacement. These are tools that can be used in ordinary adaptation of thematic material as well. Looking solely at the line used in the tenor solo section, there is even less cause for calling this a tone row. Especially since Schneider does not follow the very strict rules of this kind of composition completely. It is the case, however, that terms used in classical music tend to become a little watered down when transferred into other fields, such as jazz. The use of the term counterpoint is one example of this. It is also the case that Schneider uses the tone row much more effectively in other parts of the piece. Although mainly staying clear of *inversions* other than in the octave, and *retrograde* and *retrograde inversion*, she does follow the row quite faithfully during other sections of the piece, such as the introduction. The rhythmic treatment of the tone row makes the original material seem almost unrecognizable. I have therefore decided to retain the term in keeping with the intent of the composer, bearing in mind that it is not a tone row in the strictest of senses.

Looking at a representation of A_1 (fig. 3.28), it could have been possible to mark the first eight measures of the saxophone theme as A_1 and the next eight measures as A_2 , as the latter appears to be a variation of the first. It is, however, the case that the entire 16 measures work as a tone row, hence I have chosen to call the full 16 measures A_1 .

⁸ Alternatively named "series", "row" or "note row."



Figure 3.28: A_1 Tone Row, 109–127

One of the characteristic features of A_1 , is that it is quite complex rhythmically. There is a mixture of eight notes, triplets, syncopations and different combinations of sixteenth notes. The result is a melody that stands out against the rest of the texture. In addition to the tone row, this texture consists of close voicings in the trombones and two of the trumpets, and a line in the trumpets that can on the one hand be described as a contrapuntal line, but on the other hand has a function that resembles that of the trumpets in a regular big band, playing kick-like figures and commenting on the melody.

The chord progression that precedes A_1 is, as earlier mentioned, another very important piece of thematic material (fig. 3.29). Although the chord progression strictly speaking is a part of A , as it constitutes the harmonic foundation for the latter part of the tone row, I have chosen to discuss it as a separate element. The reason behind this is that in so many contexts it becomes an independent feature functioning almost as a “hook” in the piece. This chord progression is to be considered an ostinato and is hence a great way of prolonging sections in that it can be played repetitively for longer periods of time without having to create changes in harmonic rhythm or adding new chords in order to stretch the material. For details on the notation and use of this chord progression, see chapter 4 and 5.



Figure 3.29. Chord progression from A

The last piece of thematic material is that of the *boogie-woogie*. The boogie-woogie is a “percussive style of piano blues [...] favored for its volume and momentum” (Oliver 2012). It originated at the very beginning of the twentieth century and is characterized by “the use of blues chord progressions combined with a forceful, repetitive left-hand bass figure; many bass patterns exists but the most familiar are the ‘doubling’ of the simple blues bass [see fig. 3.30] and the walking bass in broken octaves[see fig. 3.30]” (Oliver 2012). The rhythmic distribution of the bass pattern is most commonly that of an “eight-to-the-bar” shuffle style rhythm.

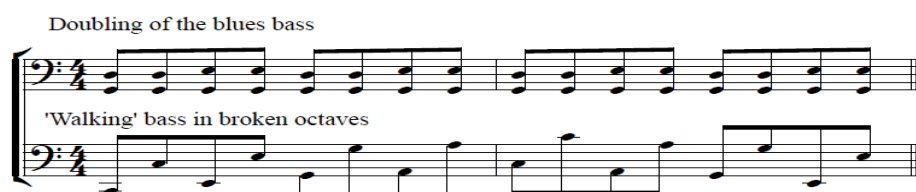


Figure 3.30. Examples of the boogie-woogie bass line (Oliver 2012)

What is particular about the boogie-woogie is the very prominent bass line. Unlike many other forms of music, the bass line becomes more than a supportive element or a keeper of time. It receives a position just as prominent as that of the treble clef melody. This is exactly what happens in *Wyrgly*. The sections based on the *B* material does not have clear melodic lines, but feature variants of this walking bass line that travels around in the musical landscape in different orchestrations.

Rhythmically Schneider’s boogie-woogie pattern is characterized by an anticipation of the first beat (see fig. 3.31). This anticipation is the single most important element in recognizing the motif, as it is present throughout the entire piece, regardless of how it is being varied upon. The syncopation puts emphasis on the first beat and makes the feel of the pattern heavier. This is quite fitting with the program of the piece. *Wyrgly* is the name of a monster and Schneider has previously stated that she wants the piece to sound “monsteristic” (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x).

One of the many variants of *B*, consists of quite few subdivisions (see fig. 3.31). This is often used in combination with a quicker version of *B* and provides the piece with something that is heavy in character at the same time as it underlines the rhythmic character of the quicker

versions of *B*. As seen by figure 3.31, the anticipation to the first beat is present in both versions.



Figure 3.31. Two variants of *B*, mm. 89-90

Melodically, the walking bass lines both follow a pattern of a general ascending motion in each measure before falling a larger interval and beginning a new ascending gesture. This is quite typical for the walking bass in general. Except for the syncopations, the notes that are on the beat can be considered target notes. Therefore, the general feel of ascent is kept despite the zigzag-like pattern of the boogie-woogie.

3.4.2 Section V: The Tenor Solo

As already mentioned, the way the improvisation is integrated into this piece differs from several of Schneider's later pieces of music in that the material presented in the melody introduction, or the head, is being used as foundation for the improvisations, much in the same way as one does in traditional big band writing. This is true for all of the three solo sections of *Wyrgly*. It should also be mentioned that even though they are based on different chord progressions, the two first solos share a specific formal scheme that is common in traditional jazz. They begin with open-ended improvisation supported only by the rhythm section before backgrounds gradually are introduced and the section goes into a climax. The guitar solo emerges from the trombone solo and has backgrounds building behind it throughout. This means that it begins at a higher dynamic level and is able to go that much farther before reaching its climax.

The tenor solo begins in measure 127 and is founded on the chord progression of *A*, only doubling the length of each chord. Schneider says that the choice of soloist arises from the form of the piece, in addition to knowing the soloist's timbre, and harmonic and melodic language very well (Schneider 2011a). In this case, the soft, individual sound of the tenor saxophone works very well with the character of Section V. It also works as a contrast to the trumpets when they enter towards the climax of the solo.

The very reuse of the chord progressions during the solos does of course help to create a certain unity between the different sections of the piece.

The first 16 measures of the tenor solo consist of almost nothing else but the rhythm section and the tenor saxophone playing. As already mentioned, this is an open solo section meaning that it can be repeated as many times as the conductor or soloist wishes it to. On the *Evanesence* recording (1994), these 16 measures are repeated five times building successively towards the ensemble part of the solo in measure 143. This is a long stretch of music and a simple compositional tool helps structure the listening and playing. The ostinato discussed earlier in this section signals the end of each repetition. It is played twice before the whole chord progression is repeated again. This functions both as a little hook, and also gives an indication of what kind of foundation upon which the solo is built.

The second section of the tenor solo begins in measure 142 and involves the entire ensemble. The section is cued and based on the chord progression present in the last four measures of the first part of the tenor solo. This makes the chord progression function almost as an advanced form of dove tailing linking the two parts together. Once again, Schneider chooses to create an additive structure consisting of three elements—including the tenor saxophone. The first time this section is played the rhythm section, trombones and saxophones repetitively play the chord progression (see fig. 3.29, p. 62 for or 4.1, p. 74). The relatively open feel of the above-mentioned voicings allows a third element (the first element being the tenor soloist) to be added to the texture. When measures 143–149 are repeated, Schneider inserts a line in the trumpets as a contrapuntal line to the tenor solo. It is played in unison and based entirely on the tone row found in measures 119–126 (see fig. 3.32). As already mentioned this may just as well be seen as a thematic adaptation of A_I because it not only follows pitches of the first melody, but also has a relatively similar rhythmical distribution.

119

Tone row, saxophones
mm. 119-126

Musical enhancements
trmps. mm. 143-150

122

Figure 3.32. Tone row from mm. 119–126 and musical enhancement mm. 143–150

In addition to creating variation and being part of an orchestral crescendo, the reappearance of this melody creates a link to the previous A-section (section IV) and also in a more distant manner to the introduction of the piece where the tone row is used in a more complex way rhythmically and harmonically. This melody being a part of an orchestral crescendo further helps integrate the solo into the piece as it clearly points out a direction for the composition and gives information for the soloist to build upon.

In measure 152, the trumpets stop playing the tone row-based line and join the rest of the ensemble in playing the ostinato. This is dynamically speaking very effective in addition to it contributing to the forward motion of the piece (for details on the orchestration of this part, see chapter 4)

3.4.3 Section VII. The Trombone Solo

For the last two solo sections of *Wyrgly*, the boogie-woogie style prevails. Preceding the trombone solo, however, there is a rhythmically ambivalent interlude similar to that of section IIa in that it operates with two time signatures simultaneously. The main melodic material of this section is based on the tone row.

The trombone solo section, however, is based on a walking bass line similar to *B2* (fig. 3.31 pp. 64) The harmonic landscape remains static in a key indicated in the score as “E-ish”. As mentioned earlier, Maria Schneider herself has emphasized that these solos should not “be anything bluesy or traditional. It should be monsteristic and atmospheric” (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x). In the open part of the trombone solo, the rhythm section plays very freely; the bass and drums keep the groove steady, while the piano and the guitar work more as coloring effects creating the ominous atmosphere of this section. The walking bass therefore works as a highly important structuring element, not only rhythmically, but harmonically as well. The interaction between the members of this small section of the ensemble intensifies slightly towards measure 174 where the backgrounds enter. The crescendo really starts building, much like the one in the tenor solo.

The backgrounds in the latter part of the trombone solo are played in a relatively low register emphasizing the top note in the piano voicings in addition to indicating the eleventh in the paralleling of the suspended chords placed on top of the walking bass line. This line

contributes a great deal of suspense to the solo and is further emphasized when the trombones enter in measure 178 playing the top three pitches of the chords. The line itself can be seen as an overall chromatic ascent as it consists of a chromatic pattern that is repeated to create a sequence where the starting pitch of each phrase is successively a minor second higher than the last. This, of course, makes for a very effective tool dynamically speaking (see fig. 3.33).



Figure 3.33. mm. 174–188. Musical enhancements.

Whether or not these lines are based on previously presented material is difficult to say purely from a listener's perspective, and one should be careful of looking for thematic unity for its own sake. It is possible however, to find certain turns and small motives in the tone row that could have been the source of the planing of suspended chords in this section. It is a fact that the contour of the tone row contains certain similarities to this chromatic line in the saxophones.

In measure 182, the paralleling of suspended chords continue, but with a doubling of tempo (see fig. 3.33) this is further developed on when the trumpets begin playing in measure 185, four measures before the climax of the section and the end of the trombone solo. The trumpets play the same rhythm as the rest of the ensemble (exempting the bass and the baritone saxophone who is continue playing the walking bass pattern), but contrary to the saxophones and trombones that still are engaging in the planing of the chords, the trumpets consistently play the same chord in the same manner throughout measures 186–188 before releasing this tremendous build-up of tension by changing the chord in the last measure of the trombone section. The trumpets are currently playing in a very high register; the E⁶ ending the section is the highest pitch in the piece so far. Throughout this section, the walking bass continues to create a sense of stability and continuation.

3.4.4 Section VIII. The Guitar Solo

A guitar solo that takes the piece to its fourth climax directly follows the trombone solo. The key is given as “D-ish” and the guitar is instructed to play “wildly on top”. The structure of the guitar solo is similar to that of the two preceding solos, except that in order to bring the

composition even further dynamically, Schneider writes musical enhancements from the very beginning of this section, introducing one instrument section at the time.

The first four measures are repeated and three different layers of boogie-woogie based patterns are introduced. As can be seen from figure 3.34, the tenors play the voice that contains the largest number of subdivisions, thereby creating contrapuntal commentaries to the simpler version of the pattern in the altos. The chromatic bass part binds the other two voices together by combining rhythmic features from both of them. It is also texturally connected to the saxophone section by being doubled by the baritone saxophone. Also notice how the anticipation of the first beat of each measure is still a characteristic feature of these variants of B₁.



Figure 3.37. “Boogie-woogie” patterns from section VIII, guitar solo

The rest of the solo section continues in much the same way. In measure 199 the “boogie-woogie” pattern that was previously found in the alto saxophones is distributed between alto 1 and tenor 1, while the second pattern is distributed between alto 2 and tenor 2, hence creating a nuanced difference in color that blends the two voices together seeing as there no longer is a distinct alto and tenor voice present. In measure 201, trumpet 1 and 2 join the rest of the ensemble playing the “boogie-woogie” pattern. Underneath these “boogie-woogie” patterns, the trombones and trumpet 3 and four have started playing sustained chords with the trombones. The rhythmic organization of these elements prevents the texture from feeling too cluttered, although it is quite rough, as it is supposed to be.

In measure 203, the trumpets change roles internally and the tenors join in on the sustained chords that previously were placed in the brass section. The trombones, on the other hand, begin to play yet another variant of the “boogie-woogie theme”; the same one as was used for the walking bass in the trombone section. This helps bind these two solos even closer together. During these last five measures before measure 208, the trumpets play in a relatively high register, but creating a substantial amount of dynamic force. They are removed from the

musical landscape entirely, however, in measure 208 before they reenter on the upbeat to measure 210 playing B⁵ and B⁴ in octaves until measure 216 where they continue playing a variant of the “boogie-woogie theme” in the same octave relationship. The rest of the ensemble play the sustained chords underneath this boogie-woogie pattern in the trumpets for the last eleven measures of the section. The increase in range in addition to using instruments going from a round timbre to a sharp timbre, help the dynamic climb.

3.4.5 Concluding comments

Although *Wyrgly* might be one of the more traditional of the pieces discussed in this chapter, it differs from most traditional big band music in its experimenting with tonality, thematic material and time. The structure of the solo sections are perhaps one of the more traditional elements of the composition in that it contains a dynamic development that can be described as being linear. The piece is pushed forward by a thickening of texture and a widening of range which gives clear messages to the soloist. The use of the A-material as a tone row opens up for cohesiveness in the arrangement without making it too obvious. The “boogie-woogie-material” permeates the composition and functions as a big and heavy engine pulling everything together.

4 The horns part II: Orchestration

My orchestration is very much integrated into the compositional process. I never manipulate a whole passage of material without having a coloristic texture in my ear at the same time. I don't always know how I'll arrive at that color but I am always hearing the orchestrational direction. When I finally score, it's like doing a coloring book (Schneider 1997: xi).

As seen in chapter 3, Schneider often reuses previously presented materials as musical enhancements in the solo sections. Still, her music rarely feels repetitive because not only does she manipulate the thematic material rhythmically, melodically and harmonically, she also continually alters its orchestration.

Getting as much color from a large jazz ensemble as possible and creating a musical substance that consists of continually changing hues is one of Schneider's greatest gifts as a composer and something she does with a great level of subtlety, especially in her more recent compositions. It is possible to say that her orchestration evolves over time, and that the shifts in color helps emphasize a sense of forward motion in her pieces. The orchestration evolves both horizontally with the continuous change of instrumentation, and vertically with the layering of different textures. The effectiveness of Schneider's musical ideas lies not only in the shape of the musical material, but also in the colors in which they are presented.

Orchestration guides the improviser by providing information regarding the character of a particular section in addition to information concerning the direction the piece is heading in. Schneider has also spoken of how she dislikes having two consecutive soloists being compared to each other. She feels it "draws the listener out of the musical experience" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x). It is therefore especially important for her to create solo sections that "have a special character that only happens once in the piece" (Schneider in Sturm 1998:x). This focus on creating sections with differing atmospheres is the main reason why her music often feels like walking through a succession of different rooms.

I have chosen to write about orchestration in this chapter because the main source of color in a large jazz ensemble is found in the horns. Schneider does often, however, draw on the colors found in the rhythm section (see chapter 5), so this chapter will also occasionally touch upon features found in that section of the band. I will begin the chapter by looking at the orchestration of *Wyrgly* and *Choro Dançado*, giving condensed scores and texture tables demonstrating how Schneider's music changes color over time, and how she often creates

additive structures pushing the pieces forward. The comparison of these two pieces is particularly interesting because *Wyrgly* is a relatively early piece while *Choro Dançado* is among her more recent works. The two pieces are very different in character, and even though Schneider seems to be more subtle in her use of orchestration in *Choro Dançado*, there are several features in *Wyrly* that remains part of “the Schneider Sound” to this day. It is also interesting that both of these solos are tenor solos.

4.1 The tenor solo in Wyrgly

What can be immediately detected when looking at the score below is that the change of texture throughout this section is quite small. As already mentioned in chapter 3, the solo section begins with an open solo without musical enhancements and very few instructions to the rhythm section. The rest of the solo can be described as an additive structure based upon the repetition of a hook linked to the thematic material of A. The texture varies between consisting of two and three elements. The two-part texture consists of a melody and an accompaniment (Piston’s texture type II). The improvised solo is the melodic element of the solo section, whereas all other activity forms the accompaniment. The three-part texture is that of secondary melody (Piston’s texture type III).

Despite the fact that the texture consists of three parts in its middle (measure 143(2)-150(2)), the dynamic development of the solo has a linear shape (see fig. 4.1), and it feels as if the activity in the ensemble is growing vertically throughout the section.



Figure 4.1. Dynamic outline of *Wyrgly*

The reason for this is that all types of textures can be distributed in a plethora of different ways throughout the ensemble. It can be voiced out broadly using many instruments playing different chord tones, or it can be orchestrated very thinly with as little as one instrument playing a particular element of the texture. *Choro Dançado* is, at times, an example of the latter. *Wyrgly* is written in a way that broadens the texture by adding instruments to the mix and creating larger voicings, adding more tension notes and changing the range for some of the instruments.

The use of instruments in this section is relatively traditional compared to many of Schneider's other pieces. Although playing the brass and the saxophones off each other was very common in earlier large jazz ensemble music, such as in Count Basie arrangements, it is not uncommon to mix the sections together. In this instance, the blend of saxophones and trombones becomes a third section within the horn section, and is consistently being revisited throughout the piece. Constellations such as these are less common in Schneider's more recent music where the instruments playing a certain element of the music is constantly developed on throughout the piece. It is also the case that *Wyrgly*'s sound resembles traditional big band music because Schneider chooses to use an instrumentation that is more or less identical to that of the traditional big band.

In the below examples, please bear in mind that measures 143–150 are played twice and are represented by the same excerpt of the score. The trumpet line is played the second time only, hence creating two different types of textures, represented by figures 4.2 and 4.3 (p.74). What should also be noticed, is that the scores are transposed in order to avoid a visually awkward score.

4.1.1 Measures 143–150

As already mentioned, the entire tenor solo is based on a small hook (see fig. 4.2). This hook is founded on a chord progression consisting of the following chords: Bb/D—Gm/Bb—Em9. The two first chords are nothing more complex than major triads distributed like a drop-2-voicing. This creates an open and slightly unstable sound. The last chord in the hook is an Em9, but it only contains the root, the seventh and the ninth of the chord. It is a spread voicing, making it sound quite large.

The voicings of these chords remains the same in the rhythm section throughout the piece, indicating that this particular sound is something that is at least as important as the nature of the chords themselves. The open structure of the chords is relying on intervals that are no smaller than a perfect fourth. In fact, all chords consist of three intervals only arranged in different ways, the octave, the sixth and the fifth. The top three notes in these voicings are doubled by both the trombones and the saxophones in what can be described as a warm register. This type of doubling is not the most common in big band music, as it is perhaps more common to distribute the saxophones across the middle of the voicings, but it is often seen in Schneider's music. The effect of all these instruments playing together in the same

range like this is a timbre that does not quite equal any of the individual sections. They blend together very well in a sound that has an airy brasslike quality to it. The brassiness probably stems from the fact that the two top trombones both play the top note of the voicing. Apart from that, the sound can be described as warm and soft, and it is impossible to discern the individual sounds of the piano and guitar from the texture. It almost resembles the sound of a synthesizer. This is in addition where these instruments' tone is at their richest, something in which contributes further to the rather soft feel of this section.

In addition to the saxophones doubling the chord notes present in the rhythm section, the second alto adds a note creating a second in the voicings. This note becomes the ninth in the Bb/D and the Gm/Bb-chords and the fifth in the Em-chord (see fig. 4.2). This added second creates a streak of something darker. It is only barely heard since the saxophones are quite far back in the mix on the *Evanescence* recording of this piece. Furthermore the added dissonance is played by one instrument only.

As already mentioned, a secondary melody built on the saxophone line found in the thematic idea of A (see chapter 3.4.1. p. 73), is added when measures 143–148 are repeated. This thickening of texture helps build the solo further. The additive texture of this solo section almost stands out as a visual form, something you could touch if you tried to.

What is interesting looking at the relationship between the secondary line found in the trumpets and the accompaniment in the rest of the band is the way they both are distributed rhythmically. This section does generally have a relatively floating sensation to it since all the chords are syncopated. The ensemble actually does not play on the first beat in any of the measures in the tenor solo section. Adding a secondary melody underneath a solo in addition to a chord progression that already has an emphasized top note, might be an easy way to create a mess, but Schneider avoids this by making the secondary melody emphasize the syncopations found in the rest of the ensemble (see. fig. 4.3).

In addition there is a selective doubling of the pickup to the hook (see fig. 4.2), bringing out this particular feature of the hook. This is perhaps especially important because the hook itself consist of a descending motion, while the pickup is ascending, making the hook seem a little more perky in addition to pushing the piece forward.

Element A (melody): tenor saxophone

Element B (accompaniment): Piano, guitar, bass, all trombones (top note doubled), Alto saxophone 1 and 2, tenor saxophone and baritone saxophone.

Figure 4.2. Condensed score *Wyrgly*, mm. 143(1)–148(1)

Element A (melody): tenor saxophone

Element B (secondary melody): All trumpets.

Element C (accompaniment): Piano, guitar, bass, all trombones (top note doubled), Alto saxophone 1 and 2, tenor saxophone and baritone saxophone.

Figure 4.3. Condensed score *Wyrgly*, mm. 143(2)–148(2)

The pickups are played in octaves by some of the brass instruments and are brought out, not only due to the doubling of voices, but because of the sharper sound of the brass instruments.

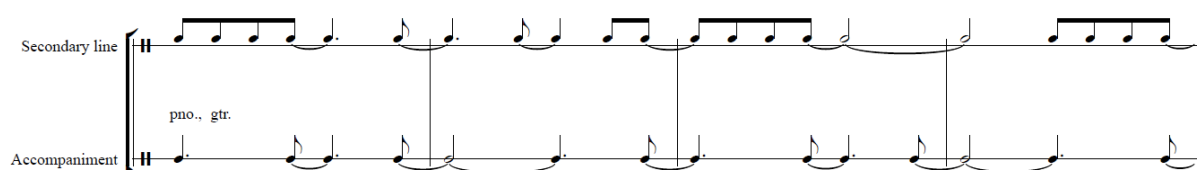


Figure. 4.4. Rhythmic representation of the secondary melody and accompaniment.

It is commonly acknowledged that going from a sound that is soft and round to a sound that is sharper and crisper can contribute to an increase in dynamic development. Schneider follows this principle in *Wyrgly*, not only by her choice of soloists (tenor–trombone–el guitar), but also in the way she builds textures. The trumpets functions as the spice that is added towards the end of a section in order to create a dynamic lift. During measures 143–148 the trumpets contribute both to creating variation, but also to a lift in the dynamic level. Still, the fact that the secondary line is played in unison and in a range where the trumpet can be described as sounding mellow, creates a texture that still sounds quite soft compared to what comes later.

4.1.2 mm. 151–160

From the measure 151 and onwards, the solo really starts to build. This is largely due to two facts: Firstly, the trombones stop playing the top melodic line and does instead add a tension note. This means that the two top notes in the trombone voicing are separated by only a second (see fig. 4.5). It is often desirable to avoid such close intervals at the top of a voicing as it tends to become a little unstable, but the fact that the trumpets are added on top of this voicing means that the two top notes in the trombone section can be considered the two middle notes in the entire ensemble section. The adding of extra dissonances creates a slightly denser texture. It thickens, but only a little. It is possible to talk of a texture that changes hue rather than color.

The second fact referred to above, is that the trumpets stop playing the secondary melody and join the rest of the ensemble playing the accompaniment. The entrance of the trumpets is especially forceful because it doubles the melody not only in its original octave, but also one octave higher. The overall ambitus of the section increases quite dramatically. In addition to doubling the melody, the trumpets also double one of the middle voices of the chord voicings. The timbre of the trumpet becomes quite sharp as they are playing at a relatively high,

dynamic level, but it is not yet at its brightest because it by no means is playing in its very top register.

The dynamics are increased further in the latter four bars of the tenor solo (see fig. 4.6). The shifts in color that occur here are due to the fact that the melodic elements in the musical enhancements are inverted from a descending motion to an ascending one, bringing the lead trumpet to end on a piercing A⁵. Furthermore yet another note is added in the trumpet voicings adding flavor such as the 11th on the Em11 chords. This is the case with the last chord of the section where the entire ensemble, including the drums, play homophonically towards a climax in measure 159 and 160 (see fig 4.6).

Element A (melody): Tenor saxophone
Element B (accompaniment): piano, guitar, bass, trombones, saxophones and trumpets.

Figure 4.5. Condensed score *Wyrgly*, mm. 151–154.

Element A (melody): Tenor saxophone
Element B (accompaniment): piano, guitar, bass, trombones, saxophones and trumpets.

Figure 4.6. Condensed score *Wyrgly*, mm. 155–159.

4.2 Choro Dançado

Seeing as the tenor solo in *Choro Dançado* is of such length, I will attempt to point to some of the areas of interest in this solo rather than analyzing its orchestration measure by measure.

Like *Wyrgly*, this solo section can be represented by a gradual increase in dynamic level and intensity. It is, however a little flatter and more stretched than that of *Wyrgly*. As seen in the previous chapter, the solo can be divided into two parts based on *A*-thematic material and *B*-thematic material, where the ascending nature of *B* contribute greatly to pushing the piece forward. In this chapter I will look at two excerpts from the *A*-section and one excerpt from the *B*-section, each representing a different phase in the solo. The textures used in this piece also vary from texture type II and III.

4.2.1 mm. 88–103

Throughout this entire section there is a continuous blend of color. The phrases in the melodic subdivision of *A* does not once reappear in the same color. Comparing *Wyrgly* and *Choro Dançado* becomes a little like comparing the way the colors blend together in an oil painting versus an aquarelle painting. During these 12 introductory bars, the orchestrational blends used to capture these short phrases are those of: clarinet; flute and clarinet; and three trumpets. (see fig. 4.7) All instruments play in a range that is without strain and has a mellow sound. The fact that so few instruments are playing, creates a sheer texture that is complemented by the sustained pitches found in the tenor and bass clarinet. These sustained pitches also contribute a sense of suspense along with the rhythmized pitches found in the rhythm section. All chord instruments in this section play syncopated notes in unison, but not in the exact same rhythmic pattern.

The next phrase is even more see-through as the flute carries the melody alone. It is supported, however by a pad in the clarinet, tenor saxophone and the bass clarinet. The major second interval could easily create much tension, but Schneider has written them in a spread position creating an open sound that adds to the sheer quality of the sound in this section.

In the last repetition of these bars, the pads are removed and the melody reenters colored by the clarinet and three trumpets playing pianissimo. Just like in *Wyrgly* this color does not sound like either the trumpet or the clarinet. It is a warm sound with a wood-like character. I believe this has much to do with the trumpets playing in pianissimo going from a high mid-range to a relatively low range. This is a part of the trumpet's register that is particularly warm and mellow, and it blends well with the clarinet, an instrument that is known for its blending abilities. This same orchestral blend continues into the next four measures where the "choro-groove" is reinstated. This creates continuity, and so does the fact that the clarinet was the instrument initiating the piece.

Figure 4.7. mm. 88–103

4.2.2 Pads

Halfway through the A-section, the musical enhancements disappear only to resurface in measure 136 (see fig. 4.8). What resurfaces, however, are not the lines based on the A material, but a succession of pads consisting of chords so closely voiced that can be called clusters. What I find fascinating about Maria Schneider's music, and especially her most recent music in this respect, is that closely voiced chords like this rarely sound very dissonant. There is crispness to them. I believe this sound is achieved by several reasons. First of all, the chords are normally played at a rather low dynamic level and the close intervals are mostly found in registers that are easily controllable for the musicians, rarely in very low or very high registers. All of these things help balance the chord. Often (but not in this case), Schneider will use mutes on the brass in order to make the tone on their instrument as thin as possible, restricting the amount of overtones present. During these measures Schneider has added notes both above the cluster (mm. 136–139) and below it (mm. 144–146), but these are voiced in thirds and fifths respectively contributing stability and color to the cluster. In order to have all the instruments in a relatively comfortable register, it is desirable that they are put in the lower

mid-register. By adding notes further apart either above these notes or below them, the color of the voicing can be brightened or darkened respectively.

Figure 4. 8. mm. 136–146

4.2.3 A closer look at timbre and voicings in *Choro Dançado*

Instead of merely looking at the latter part of the first tenor solo in *Choro Dançado*, I thought I would compare it to what happens in the second tenor solo in the piece. A closer look at two passages in the *Choro Dançado* might shed some light on how Schneider is able to use timbre and voicings in order to create two very different atmospheres. The second tenor solo is built on *B* material, so is the second part of the first tenor solo. Still, the second tenor solo comes across as fierce, dark and wild compared to the softer and more airy version of this in the first tenor solo. I therefore find it useful to compare and contrast second section of first tenor solo in *Choro Dançado* with the second tenor solo in the finale of the piece.

During entire section IIb (second part of the first tenor solo), the *B* thematic material is particularly visible in the musical landscape. In fact, one might ask whether it is this material or the soloist who is in the foreground of the section. This is largely achieved by the use of unisons and octave doubling in several different instruments throughout the section. At one point all trumpets are playing the *B* material in unison (see fig. 4.9), and when the theme is voiced out, there is a use of spread voicings in the trombones and the melody is accentuated in instruments such as the flute and clarinet an octave above the original melody. The consistency of the choro-groove further creates room for both the melody and the tenor solo. Repetition of a rhythmic figure is a tool that can be used to create an accompaniment that draws as little attention to itself as possible. In addition, the bounciness and speed at which the accompaniment is presented is a contrast to the sustained melody which further helps create a rather open texture even when almost the entire ensemble is playing.

The image shows a musical score for measures 197-204. It includes staves for voice, woodwinds (flute, clarinet, saxophone), brass (trumpets, trombones), and piano. The score contains various performance markings such as 'all tps. & voice', 'fl. cl., voice, tpt. 1', 'cl. & tpt. 2', 'tpt. 2', 'tpt. 3', 'tpt. 4', 'legato', 'rta. 3', 'pao. & bs. rta.', 'pao.', 'pao. & bs. rta.', 'cresc.', 'mp', 'cl. & tpt. 2', 'tpt. 2', 'tpt. 3', 'tpt. 4', 'pao. & rta. 3', 'rta. 3 & bs. cl.', 'pao. & bs. rta.', 'cresc.', 'mp', 'cl. & tpt. 2', 'tpt. 2', 'tpt. 3', 'tpt. 4', 'pao. & rta. 3', 'rta. 3 & bs. cl.', 'pao. & bs. rta.', 'cresc.', 'mp'. At the bottom, there are chord symbols: C^{phryg}, F^{m(b13)}, E^{tr(b)}, A^{m(b13)}, D^{yd}, A^{7(b9)}, D^{m(b9)}, C^{tr(b)}, F^{m(b13)}, B^{dim/E} A^{phryg}. The bottom staff is labeled 'Choro Slowly build'.

Figure 4.8. mm. 197–204

The open and crisp sound found in the first tenor solo, is as already mentioned a stark contrast to the way the *B* material is presented in the second tenor solo. To put it simply, the *B* material of the second tenor solo is not presented to the listener so much as it is revealed. Listening to this tenor solo for the first time, it would be difficult to detect the source of some of the musical enhancements until several measures into the solo.

Schneider begins the section by disguising the *B*-material in low close-range voicings in the trombones. The material is then gradually revealed by opening up the voicings and using fewer tension notes. At the same time, the first eight measures of the solo travels from a Phrygian mode ($F^{\text{sus}(b13\ b2)}$) to a Lydian mode (Gb^{lyd}), hence going from a mode of dark character to one with a brighter character. This further emphasizes the revealing of the *B* material as it in combination with the voicings help opening the texture. The trumpets enter in measure 261 and continue to brighten the character of the passage and make *B* become more evident. This increase in brightness occurs despite the fact that the trumpets' initial chords contain several tension notes. This is most likely due to the range that these chords are placed in in addition to the opening up of the trombone voicings. The trumpets are generally placed one octave above the trombone voicings throughout. From measure 266, the trumpets are voiced in upper triads, stable structures making the *B* material stand out.

In addition to the use of *B* material, Schneider continues to apply one of the “choro-groove 2” (see fig. 3.4. p. 42). Like in some of the previous parts, it is introduced in octaves, creating a

pedal tone (F) for the first nine and a half measures. This staticness helps build tension and creates a sense of relief and forward motion when it begins to move in measure 262. The fact that “choro-groove 2” is chosen gives contrast to the *B* material that is played in a mixture of sustained notes and shorter quarter notes. The quarter notes feel almost staccato in this passage. Because the voicings in the brass instruments were my main focus here, I have chosen to only include the brass instruments and the piano part. This does, however, represent all elements in this section’s texture.



Figure 4.9. The second tenor solo

4.3 Concluding comments

Going into depth on Schneider’s orchestration techniques would be a very large task indeed. This chapter has attempted to point out some of the tools she uses to create variation and forward motion in her compositions. As I do throughout my thesis, I focus on the solo sections, but the tools mentioned above are of course used elsewhere as well. By comparing *Wyrgly* an early piece, with *Choro Dançado* it was also possible to detect a few differences in how Schneider orchestrates. Although it appears that her orchestrations have become more sophisticated and her sound has moved further away from the traditional big band sound, it does not mean that the tools used in *Wyrgly* were not efficient in guiding a soloist through the composition. In fact, many of the tools are similar; the use of voicings and having the instruments play in appropriate registers are still important features of Schneider’s music in addition to the thickening of textures in order to create forward motion and a build towards a climax. The main difference between *Wyrgly* and *Choro Dançado* is simply that the shifts in orchestration and hence color are to a greater extent seamless in her more recent works.

5 The Rhythm Section

5.1 Function

When it comes to LIFs, the rhythm section is the most diverse component in a large jazz ensemble. It is in essence a band within the band and the individual players in it have roles very similar to those of a smaller jazz ensemble. They are in charge of keeping time and establishing a certain groove or style of playing in addition to providing the band with the harmonic foundation. Whereas smaller jazz ensembles commonly tend to operate without sheet music, the rhythm section in a big band always has to relate to a score (in addition to what is being heard). As mentioned earlier, however, the way in which a jazz musician interprets a score is somewhat different from that of most musicians within the classical music tradition. In a big band, the musicians who are allowed the most amount of freedom, apart from the soloist, are the members of the rhythm section. Due to tradition and the inherent nature of jazz, the rhythm section most commonly operates on LIF 2 and 3, but LIF 1 does also occur frequently. In addition it is the case that not only do different LIFs exist next to each other, horizontally, in any given composition, it is also the case that it can vary greatly vertically within the scoring for the rhythm section as well. In a traditional big band, LIF 1 normally occurs in tutti-parts such as shout choruses, where the piano, guitar or both plays in homophony with the horns, but also occasionally if there is a specific groove or voicing desired by the arranger. The drums are almost always on LIF 2 or 3.

In the Maria Schneider Orchestra, the rhythm section is characterized by two things in particular; firstly, its instrumentation and secondly the role distribution of those instruments. As seen in chapter 1, the MSO contains an extended rhythm section on most of Schneider's albums. Most commonly this is due to her frequent use of a percussionist in addition to the drummer, but on her later albums she has also occasionally added the accordion. The use of an extended rhythm section is not unique for the MSO, but it does contribute to the particular sound of Schneider's music. The use of a percussionist rooted in Latin music, and the accordion does both contribute to a sense of the exotic. The accordion usually plays in unison with the piano or the voice and hence it functions more like an additional color than as something having an independent function within the ensemble. It does however contribute to the MSO an effortless high tessitura and a sustained tone with a rather soft attack, much like the sound one would find in a string section in a symphony orchestra, qualities that are mostly

absent in a traditional big band configuration. As mentioned earlier, the often symbiotic relationship between the piano and the accordion can be compared to that of the relationship between the piano and the synthesizer used in Bob Brookmeyer's New Art Orchestra.

The function of the rhythm section in the MSO differs from other rhythm sections partly due to the prominence given to the piano, but also because the divide between the rhythm section and the horns are less tangible than in many other large jazz ensembles. The MSO pianist Frank Kimbrough relates how he views his "role in the band as somewhat of an ambassador between the horns and the rhythm section" (Kimbrough 2011). This is to a certain extent the case in any large jazz ensemble. Due to the enormous range of the piano and the agility with which the pianist can play, he can both join the horns playing intricate melodic lines and double the bass when for instance playing a groove. This is in addition to laying out the harmonic foundation playing chords in different rhythmic patterns. The guitar possesses a similar role, but throughout Schneider's compositions the piano becomes a central instrument in the creation of her ensemble's sound. It is almost always heard, and the guitar does at some times become an accent color to the sound of the piano. I find, however, that not only does the piano act as an ambassador between the rhythm section and the horns, it also operates as a linking element between the different orchestral blends that Schneider creates. It creates continuity between the colors originating from the horn section. When the guitar and accordion also possess similar roles, the imaginary line between the rhythm section and the horns starts becoming blurry, and that is part of the reason why Schneider can continually create subtle almost intangible shifts in color throughout her composition, at the same time as creating a sense of coherence. The fact that the instruments in the rhythm section are used in such an active manner, even on melodic material, is the reason why Schneider's rhythm section is at times a little more restricted than what is common, but it is also contributing to the sense of coherence between the sections.

The examples below are aimed at demonstrating how Schneider is able to use the rhythm section actively to create linking elements, in addition to shifts in atmosphere, between the different sections of her compositions. These are major tools in helping the improvisation melt back into what is written, both by tying the sections together by linking elements that are present regardless of the soloist's actions, but also by giving the soloist the information needed to take the music where it is intended to go.

5.2 LIF 1

5.2.1 Melodic elements in the rhythm section.

Figure 5.1. is an excerpt from the transition between the piano solo and the finale of *Choro Dançado*. Most of the examples used in this thesis are taken from the solo sections, but this particular part of Schneider's composition shows how she uses LIF 1 in order to create coherence between the different sections of the composition. Generally speaking, Schneider uses LIF 1 much more than what is common in big band music, just like her mentor Bob Brookmeyer. In this excerpt, the drums is the only element not operating on LIF 1. The drums does, in fact, operate on LIF 3 throughout this piece.



Figure 5.1. *Choro Dançado*, mm. 221–228

The first element that should be noticed here is the piano. These measures can be considered the ending of the piano solo, and by letting the piano double the line played in the reed section (S, fig. 3.5. p. 42), Schneider creates a sense of continuity that would have been lost had the piano simply reverted to playing chords or nothing at all after his solo. Not only does this line almost feel improvised in nature, but the soloistic element of it allows for a gradual change of roles. The pianist goes from being the soloist in the foreground of the mix, at the center; to being part of a choir, a coloring element of a blend; before receding even further into the background by playing accompanimental figures. The piano's role as a linking element between different orchestrational blends is also preserved in this example, as it does not only double the flute and clarinet, but almost all of the different lines presented in these bars.

Looking at this in a slightly different way, one could actually say that the orchestra is doubling the piano and not the other way around, seeing as all of the different components of these measures can be found in the piano part. This is, in fact a typical example of Schneider's orchestration where her background as a pianist can be discerned merely by looking at the score. It is as if the other instruments are thickening the lines found in the piano giving color and shading to them. This is one of the reasons why the piano is so central in Schneider's music. And the fact that her melodic lines almost always has a core sound that is embellished upon by other instruments.

The bass is doubling the bass trombone; the guitar is playing a the rhythmic ostinato described in chapter 3.2.5.(p. 50) There is a slight rhythmic displacement between the two lines forming this ostinato. This creates tension during these measures, but also continuity between the piano solo section, through this interlude, and into the final section of the piece. This sense of continuity is enhanced because parts of the ostinato continues to be played during the last section of the piece. It is also the case that it is based on "choro-groove 2" works as an important unifying factor internally in the piece, contributing to the inevitable feel of the solo sections. I find that one rarely think "oh, there comes the solo" in Schneider's music because they seem to naturally grow out of that which is composed. This is an example of how it is possible to create such a structure.

Another reason why Schneider might tend to through compose large part of the rhythm section's score might be that she often creates dense textures consisting of several contrapuntal lines in addition to rhythmic harmonic patterns. Having the guitar and the piano being doubled by the other instruments and vice versa avoids unnecessary clutter. There simply is very little, if any, room for individual parts in such a texture.

5.2.2 Accompanimental elements in the rhythm section

In many instances, Schneider chooses to through compose the accompaniment in the rhythm section for longer or shorter stretches in her compositions. This is most commonly done if the chords are to be doubled by other instruments, either internally in the rhythm section or with the horns; or if Schneider wants a particular chord voicing, rhythmic style of playing or a particular top note of the chords. In the following example from *Wyrgly* the chords are notated to be played as written for all of the above reasons.



Figure 5.2. *Wyrgly*, mm. 138–142

This hook or chord progression presented in figure 5.2 is originally found as a small part of the thematic material called A_1 in chapter 3 (p. 62) and has several functions throughout the piece. As touched upon earlier, the last measures of the open part of the tenor section (mm. 138–142), serves as a cue to both the soloist and the listeners that we have reached the end of one chorus. In a section where the only instruments playing are the rhythm section and the soloist, this is a nice and structured element for the ear to grasp hold of. It is also an element that links different sections of the piece together as it both points back to the first time A was played in addition to foreshadowing the next part of the tenor solo. It has the character of an interlude, and it hints that more is to come. At the same time it is used for extending the solo sections based on A -material by being used as an ostinato (mm. 143–160). This helps keep the open part of the solo thematically connected to the ensemble part of the solo.

But why use LIF 1 to create this ostinato when the chords also could be played by notating them with chord symbols and rhythmic notation, a method of notation belonging to LIF 2? The answer does again return to orchestration. One of the reasons why there are no chord symbols is that the sound of this succession of chords is as important as the chords themselves. The continuity between this chord progression found in the rhythm section and later in larger parts of the entire ensemble, is not only found in the top voice of these chords, or the nature of each individual chord, but in the actual sound and color of the voicing. The details concerning the type of voicing used and the nature of the sound of the chords were discussed in chapter 4. Once again all of the music played except from the drums can be found in the piano part.

5.3 LIF 2: An emphasis on rhythmic patterns

In essence, the rhythm section parts written with LIF 2 contain a chord chart *and* some additional information. As already mentioned there are three main ways in which this can be notated.

The first method of notation is that of *fully notated chord voicings with chord symbols*. This is a level of notation that first and foremost can be applied to the chord-playing instruments of the rhythm section. It is often found in traditional big band charts, but since there is no standardized way of notation when it comes to the rhythm section, each player reacts differently to this kind of score depending on the music being played. Often the voicings included are the those of the horns, and they are there merely to help the pianist or guitarist adjust their play around that. Other times the arranger means the music to be played as written. In case of the latter, this method of notation should be placed underneath the heading of LIF 1. This is often the case in Schneider's compositions. The mere presence of the chords, however, usually indicates that the musician can take some liberties with the score as long as he or she plays in a style fitting the piece. When Schneider uses this form of notation, she often adds some text next to it indicating if the musician can play relatively freely. The notation is often either indicating the general rhythmic style of the music, or it can also be used for harmonic information, when there is use of a pedal tone, specific mode or similar.

A second method of notation is that of *top note of voicing with chord symbols*. This gives information of both top voice and what notes to play in addition to rhythm. It does not give information regarding voicings. This is a form of notation that is rarely found in Schneider's scores, mainly because she tends to write the entire voicing in instances where this type of notation would typically occur.

The third method of notation, is that of *Chord symbols combined with rhythmic notation*. This is where the element of style truly comes into the picture at LIF 2. There are two kinds of notation that can be described as *Chord symbols combined with rhythmic notation*. Firstly there is the kind often used in homophonic writing in big band ensembles, i.e. when you want all of the instruments of the band to play the same rhythmic pattern at the same time. This is often used during shout choruses in traditional big band writing, which rarely is present in Schneider's music. This technique is mostly used for shorter rhythmic patterns that are to emphasize something happening elsewhere in the band. This type of notation is also typically used when the composer wants to introduce a certain type of groove or vamp. These often

consist of one or two bars that are repeated, and it is common to only write this pattern once and then asking the performer to continue playing it at his own discretion, meaning that he is to keep within the instructed style, but can play around with it relatively freely.

In Schneider's music, though, there is a surprisingly small amount of this type of notation. I believe that is partly a result of her frequent use of LIF 1 and partly due to the fact that the ensemble is so well acquainted and have played together for so long that agreements are being made both internally in the rhythm section in addition to between Schneider and her musicians at rehearsal. Schneider usually meets with some of her musicians during the compositional process and before rehearsal so that the musicians know her vision. One should therefore not disregard the importance of communication between the composer and the band for the finished product. In this chapter I will give two examples of how Schneider uses this type of notation to give the ensemble information about elements that are of rhythmic importance in addition to allowing them enough liberty to create variation upon those patterns that are received.

The first example is taken from measures 87–88 in *The Pretty Road* (see example 5.3). This is a small excerpt of the introduction to the flugelhorn solo in section II of the piece. Here Schneider has written chord voicings and bass line with chord symbols in the first measure, before writing a measure with slash notation and the text: “or whatever.” These two bars are repeated throughout the next 16 measures. It is the case however, that while the rest of the rhythm section seems to be playing this part as written, the piano improvises around it. This is to be expected with this form of notation. The rhythmic pattern is embellished on by adding an extra attack on the second chord in addition the piano “playing around” the groove that is being established (see fig. 5.3, piano transcribed). The effect of this notation is that there is common agreement upon the rhythmic feel of the piece at the same time as the method of notation opens up for personal interpretation that creates variation and an improvised feel to the section. It also gives the musicians more freedom to respond to the soloist. Notice how the guitar, bass and accordion refrain from too much improvising during these measures despite the fact that Schneider has written “or whatever” above the latter measure of the two measures that are grouped together. This ensures that the piano becomes the central feature of the accompaniment.

The image shows a musical score for measures 87-88 of 'The Pretty Road'. The score is written for six instruments: Accordion (score), Guitar (score), Piano (score), Piano transcribed, Bass (score), and Drums (score). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics 'or whatever' are written above the staff lines. The notation includes various musical symbols such as chords (A/C#, D2), slurs, and slash notation for the drums. The piano part is transcribed in both treble and bass staves. The bass part is written in a single staff. The drums part is written in a single staff with slash notation and cues.

Figure 5.3. The Pretty Road, mm. 87–88

The second illustration is taken from *Wyrgly* and is an example of how the drummer is the person who mostly plays either on LIF 2 or LIF 3 in Schneider's compositions. Very often Schneider writes slash notation for the drums in addition to cues giving him important rhythmic information about what is going on in the rest of the ensemble.

In section V in *Wyrgly*, measures 155–160, Schneider has used this kind of notation (see fig. 5.4). The cues given to the drummer next to the slash notation, are consistent with the rhythms found in parts of the horn section and partly reflects what is going on in the rhythm section. Listening to the drummer's play during these measures, one detects that he plays relatively independently of these cues but that he occasionally joins in on them or uses them to create fills setting up the rhythmic patterns played in the horn section. This is something that helps create coherence internally in the orchestra and again allows the drummer to respond to what he hears in the rest of the ensemble. The squares in the drum part marks what cues he is emphasizing when playing. It is also the case that notating what is being played by the drummer during these bars would create a drum part that was extremely complex and difficult to read.

Figure 5.4. Wyrgly mm. 155–160

5.4 LIF 3: Shaping a solo section using harmonic rhythm and modulation

In *The Pretty Road*, Schneider introduces a solo section where the entire rhythm section plays on LIF 3, meaning that she apparently has a relatively small amount of control over what will happen. This is mainly because she does not introduce musical enhancements in the horns until the very end of the piece.

LIF 3 is often used during solo sections. Allowing not only the soloist, but also the rhythm section, a certain amount of freedom during these parts of the compositions, can be of an advantage as it gives the players more liberty to respond to each other's actions. In addition Schneider and her musicians know each other extremely well and have played together for a long time, something which means that they are very familiar with each other's style of playing.

The Pretty Road is an example of how Schneider is able to balance her own vision with allowing musicians in her ensemble a large amount of individual freedom. It is common in big band ensembles to have solos accompanied only by the rhythm section, or even by parts of it. This can serve as a contrast within the arrangement, but the danger is often that these parts sound like a normal jazz trio or quartet only loosely tied to the rest of the arrangement, like an island inside the piece. The first flugelhorn solo in *The Pretty Road* features just such a configuration. The larger parts of the solo consist of nothing but the flugelhorn and the rhythm section. But unlike many traditional big band arrangements, Schneider has created a

new harmonic foundation for this part of the composition especially designed to produce forward motion and to provide the soloist with information about where the composition is headed. The scoring for the rhythm section consists solely of slash notation and the only information given to them in the score is “to lift a little on the asterisks [sic]” (Schneider 2011c). That Schneider has provided additional information during practice and that she and her musicians know each other well enough to understand a great deal of what is expected, cannot and should not be overlooked, but I find that the main structure of this solo section is found in the way Schneider has chosen to create its harmonic foundation.

Looking at the chart over harmonic rhythm and change in key (fig. 5.5) it is quite easy to see how Maria Schneider is able to control the development of the piece through the manipulation of harmonic rhythm and modulation. The stretched harmonic planes that spur off this solo combined with a slow harmonic rhythm create room for the soloist to be creative at the same time as it gives both the soloist and the listener, clear indications of where the music is going. The gentle play of the rhythm section allows Ingrid Jensen to play beautiful introductory melodic lines. However, each time the music modulates, the tension grows, and foreshadows the climax that will appear later in the solo.

Schneider indicates that the musicians should “lift a little at the asterisks [sic]” (Schneider 2011c) from measure 111 and onwards. These asterisks are placed at the beginning of every modulation contributing to the feel of forward motion rather than just swapping between two different keys. This increase of intensity and dynamic level in the rhythm section continues until measure 159, where Schneider not only decides to double the harmonic rhythm, but also increases the frequency with which the music modulates. The solo section begins with 16 measures of A Ionian before modulating to C Ionian for only 8 measures, giving the listener a taste of what is to come. This is followed by a 20 measures long stretch of A Ionian before the solo ventures into 16 measures of C Ionian. The fact that these key changes happens across the 8-measure periods of the solo increases the intensity of the piece. After this, the music seems to speed up, as the two next planes are halved. Only four measures of A Ionian spur off the climatic phase of the section where the piece modulates every two bars and has a harmonic rhythm that includes two chords per measure (mm. 159 onwards). This is where the piece is really beginning to build, and where Schneider chooses to introduce musical enhancements in the solo for the first time enhancing the effect of the modulations and the doubled harmonic rhythm.

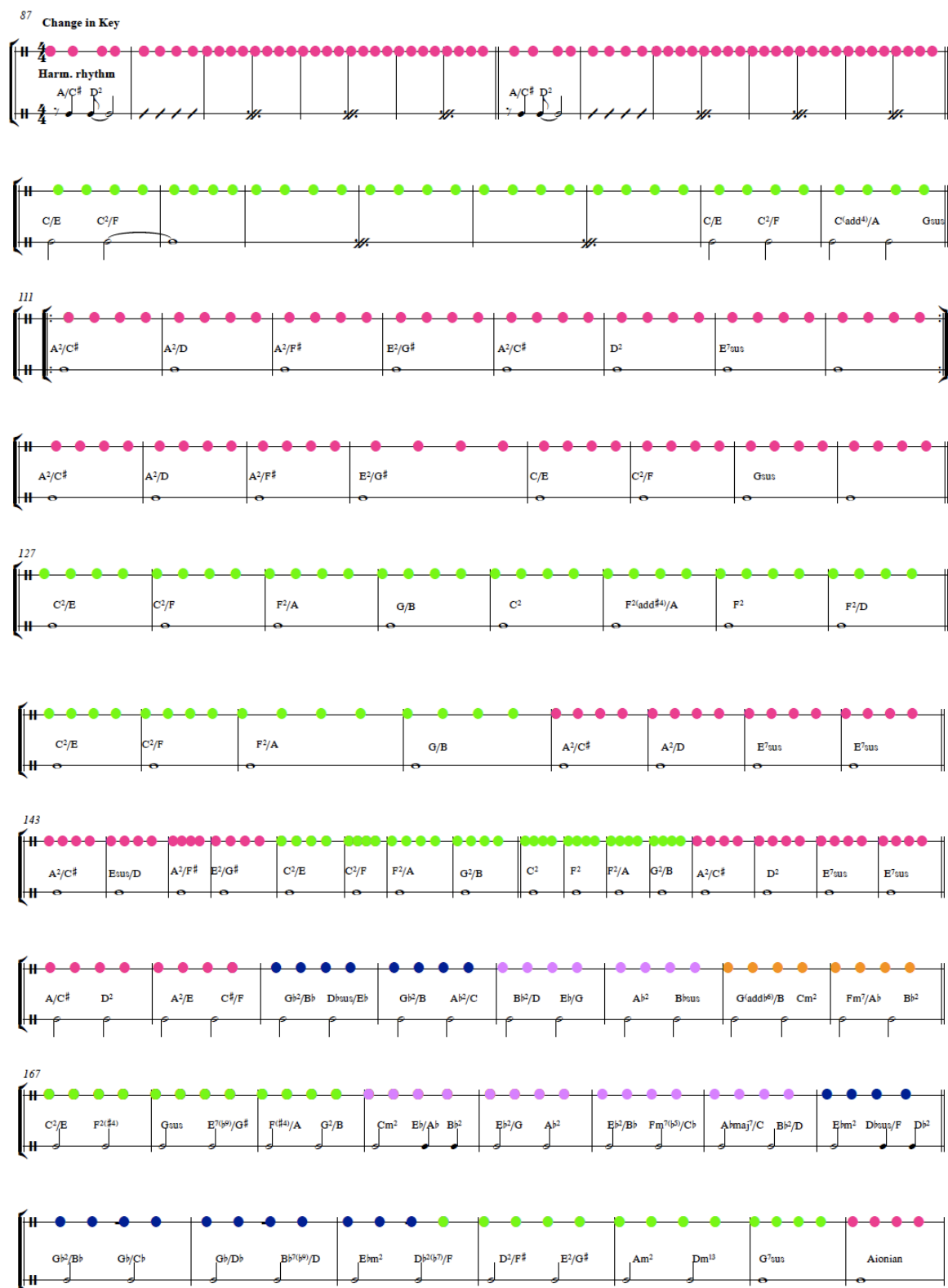


Figure 5.5. Colored chord chart displaying harmonic rhythm and change in key, mm. 87–181

m. 161			
G^{b2}/B^b D^bsus4/E^b	G^{b2}/B A^{b2}/C	B^b/D E^b/G	A^{b2} B^bsus4
G ^b : I ² /3 V ^{sus4} /9	I ² /4 V ² /V/3 E^b : IV ² /3	V/3 I/3	IV ² V ^{sus4}

m. 165			
G^(add b6)/B Cm²	Fm²/A^b B^{b2}	C²/E F^(#4)	G^{sus4} E^{7(b9)}/G[#]
Cm : I ^(add b6) /3 IVm ²	IVm ² /3 VII ²		
E^b : V ^(add6) /VI VIm ² /I	C : ^b VII ²	I ² /3 IV ^(#4)	V ^{sus4} V ^{7(b9)} /VI/3

m. 169			
F^(#4)/A G²/B	Cm² E^b/A^b B^{b2}	E^{b2}/G A^{b2}	E^{b2}/B^b Fm^{7(b5)}/C^b
E^b : V ² /VI VIm ²	I/4 V ²	I ² /3 IV ²	I ² /5 IIm ^{7(b5)} /b5
IV ^(#4) /3 V ² /3			

m. 173			
A^bmaj⁷/C B^{b2}/D	E^bm² D^bsus4/F D^{b2}	G^{b2}/B^b G^b/C^b	G^b/D^b B^{b7(b9)}/D
E^b : IV ^{maj⁷} /3 V ² /3	Im ² (MI)	G ^b : I ² /3 I/4	I/5 III ^{7(b9)} /3
	G^b : VIm ² V ^{sus4} /3 V ²	I ² /3 I/4	I/5 V ^{b7(b9)} /VI/3

m. 177							
E ^b m ²	D ^{b2(b7)} /F	D ² /F#	E ² /G#	Am ²	Dm ¹³	G ^{7sus4}	A ^{maj7}
VIm ²	C: ^{sub} V ^{2(b7)} /I	V ² /V/3	V ² /VI/3	VIm ²	IIm ¹³	V ^{7sus4}	VI ^{maj7}

Figure 5.6. Harmonic analysis, mm. 161–181

Looking a little closer at the modulations in the latter part of the solo section, it becomes even clearer how Schneider manages to obtain a solo section that feels like a “force of nature” when it comes to creating forward motion. The modulations seems to be inspired by the bass line and tracking the tonal center throughout this section is quite difficult. In chapter 2, I wrote about Naus’ definitins of three different key areas, the *established* key are, the *implied* key area and the *ambiguous* key area. In my opinion, the last measures of the flugelhorn solo belongs to that of the *implied* key area. Naus talk of a type of progression where one is constantly looking for the I-chord, but is unable to find it. This can contribute to a sense of restlessness. He also wrote that the chords used include secondary dominants, substitute dominants and modal interchange chords, all of which can be found here (Naus 2009:19). It is not entirely true that the chord progression never reaches the I here, but it *is* the case that there is never a resolution to a I-chord where the root is in the bass. The only exception to this is in measure 174 (see fig. 5.6), where Ebm follows its dominant Bb7(b9)/D. However, this cadence does not give the listener the satisfactory feeling of stability as the Ebm chord can be seen as a *Modal Interchange* chord. We are in the key of Eb major and expect the Bb7(b9)/D to go to an Eb-chord. Instead Schneider borrows notes from the Eb minor scale and

unexpectedly ends the cadence on a minor chord (Im). The rest of the modulation-phase of the solo consistently consists of chords with bass notes that are different from their roots, creating a restlessness that is enhanced by the frequent use of deceptive cadences and secondary dominants. In addition there is a great amount of stepwise ascending motion in the bass further pushing the piece forward. Looking at the harmonic analysis, one notices that even the last cadence of the solo is a deceptive cadence (V7sus4–VImaj7).

5.5 Concluding comments

This chapter has aimed to show how Schneider uses the different LIFs in order to create coherence in her compositions despite allowing a large amount of freedom to the rhythm section. The rhythm section is the corner stone of the large jazz ensemble and it often sets the tone for the piece by providing harmony, time and rhythmic style. As seen in the above examples, Schneider uses a greater amount of notation in the rhythm section than what is perhaps common. This is true to a large extent because she involves the rhythm section into the orchestration of her pieces and exploits the colors that are found there for what they are worth. She is able to manipulate the rhythm section by using tools such as written comments in the score, rhythmic groove patterns that are to be played *simile ad lib* (meaning that you are to continue playing in , and fully written out parts, all depending on what is needed at different times of the composition. Often, the rhythm section is given more freedom during the solo section than the ensemble sections, especially when it is part of the piece where there are no musical enhancements. When the rhythm section operates on LIF 3, Schneider is very conscious of the chord progression provided to the section. There are several examples where she uses harmony and harmonic rhythm to shape a solo section. However, despite all the above parameters, there is one parameter that should not be forgotten. Schneider conducts her own orchestra and is able to give immediate feedback to her musicians shaping the music to go where she wants it to go. The spoken word, hence, should not be underestimated. Neither should the close working relationship between her and her musicians be overlooked.

6 The soloist

6.1 Function

I try to give the soloist something where the soloist is almost telling a story, that they're really integrated into the composition, they're not just playing everything that they can play and showing what a great soloist they are, but that they're trying to create something really dramatic and important to the meaning of the piece (Schneider 2011a)

The above quotation reveals Maria Schneider's thoughts regarding the function of the soloist in her compositions. The idea of the soloist as a narrator in her work is indicated in the way she constructs the solo sections. As seen earlier in this thesis, they tend to have a very clear direction and are designed to both guide the soloist and create coherence between sections. In some ways these elements are two sides of the same matter.

Even though Schneider ensures a certain amount of coherence by reusing thematic ideas and motives, this is not necessarily enough to really make the improvisation seem integrated. It is also important that the musician is aware of his role in the music; that he is not there to show off or try to outdo the previous soloist. He is, as Schneider puts it, an actor in a play, a part of a whole, and he is there to serve the music and the message it is to convey (Schneider in Sturm 1998:ix).

In order to be this integrated part of the whole, it is necessary that the musician understands the music and what is expected from him. This, of course, is the case in all music, but Schneider is particularly good at conveying these expectations, not merely by spoken communication, but in the very way she constructs her solos, the way in which she chooses to distribute and orchestrate her carefully selected material and how through composing contributes to a sense of forward motion and development rather than having the solo section become a battle ground of choruses (although that can be fun as well).

In this chapter, I will look at sections of each of the three pieces discussed earlier in order to detect how that which is written seems to influence the soloist. The solos transcribed in the examples below are all from the recordings presented in the introduction, and I would like to stress that these solos only present *one* of many possible solutions of how to improvise on Schneider's music. Because all these examples are found on released recordings, one should be able to assume that they are keeping in line with Schneider's intent for the different pieces,

but it would be wrong to consider them the ultimate versions of them as music in general is a phenomenon created in time, and this music in particular is reliant on the factor of risk and spontaneity that is provided from improvisation and the fact that the music can be dramatically different every time it is performed. It would be more than possible to turn this into a lengthy discussion of the performative aspect of music, but due to the scope of this thesis, I believe it will suffice to say that the excerpts of improvisation on the following pages are only to be considered examples showing how Schneider's methods of composition *may* work. They are quite possibly also examples of how they are meant to work, because Schneider herself acts as composer and band leader *and* always has the final say during the recording of her albums.

Before beginning my analysis, I should mention that material chosen for transcription was of great rhythmic complexity and of such a nature that it would be near impossible to notate it exactly as played. In order to create transcriptions that are easily read and serve the purposes of this chapter, some simplifications have been made.

6.2 Choro Dançado

In this part of the thesis, I have chosen once again to take a closer look at the first tenor solo (section II, p. 38) in *Choro Dançado*. As has already been demonstrated in chapters 3 and 4, this section can be divided into two parts each based on a specific type of thematic material. The first section is based on *A* material (see chapter 3, p. 40), while the second is based on *B* material (see chapter 3 p.41) The very nature of these thematic ideas and their orchestration sends certain signals to the soloist. Taking an overall look at the solo, it seems that Schneider guides the soloist from having a role almost as a commentator to gradually receiving a more prominent role until he from measure 120 onwards becomes the main element of focus as the musical enhancements are removed. On this particular recording of *Choro Dançado*, Rich Perry is the soloist.

6.2.1 Introductory passages

During the opening measures of the solo the sparsely orchestrated musical enhancements in the horns, combined with a static accompaniment in the rhythm section, create an atmosphere that is dwelling and calm, and the soloist is asked to play "simple answers". Rich Perry solves this task by beginning his phrases when the musical enhancements are at their most inactive

(see measures 90–95, fig. 6.1). The first phrase he plays almost exactly mimics the opening phrase in the musical enhancements (see mm. 90-91, fig. 6.1), creating a link between that which is improvised and that which is not. This draws attention to the musical enhancements themselves and contributes to the thematic connection both between the soloist and the ensemble internally in the section and between this solo section and the rest of the piece. The fact that the phrase is displaced by one whole beat, combined with some ornamentation toward the end, creates subtle variation. Perry responds to the character of this section by playing these sparse phrases with a gentle, relaxed and airy sound.

What is interesting is that during measures 88–103 (fig. 6.1), Perry continuously bites into larger sections of the musical enhancements at the same time as the orchestration of these lines increases almost imperceptibly in thickness. By doing this, he is very subtly taking up a little more space. If one also listens to the similar passages later in the solo, one discovers that the soloist plays continuously across and on top of these musical enhancements, stealing even more of the attention from the rest of the ensemble.

Chapter 3 demonstrated how the A-part of the solo is structured around a harmonic form that consists of a dwelling part moving between different modal planes based on the Phrygian major 3rd scale, and a “choro-part” that is more rhythmic in nature. The floating feel of the first part is a contrast to the frisky “choro-part.” This contrast is emphasized by Perry by the fact that he almost consequently plays phrases beginning on the downbeat during the “choro-parts” of the solo. In addition these phrases tend to have a rather melodic nature and are easier to grasp for the listener than the lines played over the more floating sections of the piece. This is exemplified in measure 100 (see fig. 6.1) where Perry plays lines that are not only lacking the syncopations found in the earlier phrases, but introduces triplets, which help the impression of the section accelerating and moving forward. The on-the-beat nature of the soloist’s play also serves as a contrast to the off-beat accompaniment in the rhythm section. This is even further emphasized later in the solo.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 88-97) features a tenor soloist (tenor solo) with a melodic line. The accompaniment includes a clarinet (cl.) playing a sustained note, a tuba (tbn.) playing a low, sustained note, and a piano (pno.) playing a rhythmic pattern. The second system (measures 98-103) features a guitar (gtr.) and piano (pno.) accompaniment. The guitar plays a rhythmic pattern, and the piano plays a sustained note. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (mp, pp).

Figure 6.1. mm. 88-103

6.2.2 Increased focus on the soloist

Skipping a few measures ahead, the tenor soloist is once again given more attention and there is a slight change of character in what has been written (fig. 6.2). This is due to the fact that all musical enhancements are removed. The static nature of the rhythm section accompaniment combined with the removal of the descending lines used previously in the piece, creates an almost mystical atmosphere with a lot of space to the soloist. This is reinforced by the fact that Perry begins his solo by playing a phrase that is initiated by three quarter notes played on the beat, bending the first one, making it feel as if the piece is decelerating. This is further stressed by how Perry plays with an elastic sense of time.

The next phrase emphasizes the minor second interval between the F and Gb that is so characteristic for the F Phrygian major 3rd scale. The scale in itself carries a certain exotic mystique, and this is enhanced when Perry highlights its most characteristic traits (fig. 6.2). The fact that the phrase runs across two different modal planes helps mask the transition between the planes somewhat and enhance the feeling of something floating. The mystical air of these measures is further brought forth by the low range the phrase is played in. The tenor climbs pitch-wise towards the end of this solo before descending again. This arch form creates an increase in intensity that is supported by the rhythm section.

The musical score for Figure 6.2, measures 120-131, is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'tenor solo', includes staves for guitar, piano, and bass (F phryg(maj3)), drums (Flow), and cymbals (Cym. again (chord changes every four bars)). The second system, labeled 'B phryg(maj3)', and the third system, labeled 'Eb phryg(maj3)', continue the tenor solo line. The tenor solo line features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 6.2. mm. 120–131

The next phase of development happens in measure 136, when the musical enhancements reenter. They do not attract much attention, however, as they consist of sustained chords only, but they give the soloist a gentle nudge in right direction, signaling the initiation of a climb dynamically speaking.

6.2.3 Building towards a climax

When the *B*-material enters in the second part of the tenor solo (Section II b), the piece really begins to climb dynamically. The ascending nature of these musical enhancements and their orchestrations are extremely effective in initiating and providing a continuous increase in

dynamics and creating forward motion throughout the rest of the solo. This musical enhancement is so effective that it would be difficult to imagine how the solo could possibly be taking any other direction than what it already does. If it had not been for the fact that the soloist has established some momentum at this point, the musical enhancements could have easily taken over as focal point. Generally speaking the soloist seems to respond to this section by first of all, playing louder, and second of all, playing higher in his register. He often descends only to begin another climb.

The excerpt I have chosen to take a closer look at from this part of the solo, are the measures 176-196 (see fig. 6.3. pp. 101-103), the very last measures of the first tenor solo. This is where the *B*-theme is being octavated by the addition of reed instruments on top of the trumpet, meaning that the musical enhancements truly work the piece towards a climax. Surprisingly enough, even though Perry, at times, plays in a quite high tessitura, this section is dominated by phrases of a descending nature. My opinion is that this both works as a contrast to the ascending character of *B*, at the same time as the descending phrases function as a contrast to the shorter ascending ones. When Perry plays high notes, they become protruding elements in the texture because their timbre is different from other notes played. It is also the case that he plays with a heightened level of intensity which is increased by the fact that he plays different kinds of sequences throughout the solo. The entire solo teeters out in a descending gesture shared by the ensemble. This descending gesture is an effective signal to the soloist that he should be calming down and set up for the next solo.

The musical score for measures 176-196 is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff is labeled 'tenor solo' and contains a melodic line with various ornaments and trills. Below it, the 'fl. cl. tpt.' staff shows the woodwind and trumpet parts, with the trumpet part featuring a descending line. The 'tpts. 1 & 2' staff shows the first and second trumpet parts, which are playing a descending line. The 'tpts. 1 & 2 bs. cl.' staff shows the first and second trumpet parts and the baritone saxophone, which are playing a descending line. The 'tr. bs. cl.' staff shows the trumpet, baritone saxophone, and the tuba, which are playing a descending line. The 'pno. & gtr.' staff shows the piano and guitar parts, which are playing a descending line. The 'bass' staff shows the bass line, which is playing a descending line. The 'Dphryg' staff shows the double bass and the Dphryg, which are playing a descending line. The 'G harm. minor.' staff shows the guitar harmonic minor scale, which is playing a descending line.

fl. cl.

tr.

tpts. 1, 2
tpt. 3
tpt. 4

tpts. 2 & 3
tpt. 4

tpt. 3
tpt. 4

tpt. 4

tpt. 4 & bs. cl.

tpt. 1
tpt. 2
tpt. 3
tr.

trbn. 1
trbn. 2 & bs. cl.

trbn. 1
bs. cl.
trbn. 2

trbn. 1
trbn. 2
trbn. 3, tr. & bs.

trbn. 3
bs. trbn.

gtr., pno. & bass
Gphryg(maj³)

C harm. min.

Cm⁷(b¹³)/Bb

Aøphryg(maj³)

peak!

tpts. 2 & 3
trbns. 1 & 2

F#sus¹³

Aømaj⁷(b¹³)/F

Bømaj⁷(b¹³)

G harm. minor

Figure. 6.3 mm. 176-196

6.3 Wyrgly

For the sake of coherence, I am looking at the solo section discussed in chapter 4, the first tenor solo. As has already been seen, this solo is structured along relatively simple lines, and what is perhaps most striking is the rhythmic aspect of the chord progression permeating the entire second part of this section, from the drummer to the trumpets added at the end of the solo.

I will focus mainly on the second part of the solo section, since this is where Schneider is most influential in shaping the solo. But in order to give some context to the second section, I will give some brief comments on what happens in the open part of the solo. As mentioned earlier the solo gradually increases in volume and intensity. This development begins in the first solo section which has a very calm opening character. There are few guidelines in the score, but this initial part of the solo seems to benefit from this exchange of ideas happening between the soloist and the rhythm section. The soloist tends to play phrases that are either arch formed, or play phrases that are ascending and descending interchangeably. This is true for almost the entire solo. The dynamics of the open section is controlled by the interplay between the soloist and the rhythm section. The soloist begins playing sparsely and increases

the intensity in his play going faster and higher in addition to creating longer phrases. The chord progression used for structure and spoken of earlier (see chapter 4), signals the beginning of a new repetition and creates a link to the second part of the solo. Each new repetition of this part reflects a change in the dynamic level of the piece—it increases.

6.3.1 Measures 143(1)–150(1)

As mentioned in chapter 4 and in the introduction above, the entire ensemble emphasizes the syncopations found in the chord progression. This means that the soloist has a very predictable base to play upon. Everything that happens in the ensemble from the thickening of voicings to the adding of a secondary melody helps enhance the dynamics direction and the intensity of the music produced. The fact that it pushes the soloist in the same direction can be seen by looking at a transcript of this solo (fig. 6.4). With the exception of the first measure (m. 143(1)), Rick Margitza, the tenor soloist, plays almost exclusively phrases based on sixteenth notes and triplets (fig. 6.4). Measure 143(1) initiates the continuation of the dynamic climb by Margitza playing short motives that are reminiscent of the pickup to the vamp in the ensemble. These are ascending and create contrary motion to the chord progression that is an overall descending gesture. The ascending motion is compensated for by a descending run. As mentioned earlier, this tenor solo has an overall wave-like shape. Until the trumpets enter the phrases interchangeably ascend and descend and although the solo does not emphasize the syncopations in the rest of the ensemble, all the phrases in measures 143–150(1) end on the beat that coincides with the final sustained note of the vamp (see mm. 144(1), 146(1), (148(1)) 150(1)). It can be argued that the phrase beginning in measure 147(1) ends in measure 150 as everything between those measures are played in one breath. However, it can be divided into two parts, where the first part ends in measure 148(1) on what is one of the highest notes in the solo (G⁵). This particular note contributes to the dynamic increase. It is in an extreme range on the tenor saxophone and sounds strained. It, in short, conveys a great amount of energy.

Figure 6.4 mm. 143 (1)–150(1)

6.3.2 mm. 143(2)—150(2)

The introduction of the trumpets on the pickup to measure 143(2)⁹ (see fig. 6.5, p. 107), has an immediate effect on the soloist. They add a new layer to the texture, and even without the

⁹ mm. 143—150 are repeated. (1)=First time played, (2)=second time played.

presence of the soloist, push the piece forward. This forward motion is reflected and enhanced by Margitza's playing. Looking at the transcription of the solo, there is still an overall wave-like movement in what he plays. However, the ascending and descending gestures are repeated at a much higher frequency. Until now, the individual phrases have ascended and descended interchangeably, but now the individual phrases themselves have a waveform. This is partly because the soloist plays repetitive patterns (e.g. in mm. 143(2)-145(2)). The increased frequency of the waveform coincides with an elongation of the phrases played. The phrases in measures 143(2)-150(2) are roughly speaking almost double the length of those in measures 143(1)-150(1). As a consequence of this, there are smaller breaks between these phrases than earlier. This contributes highly to an increase in the intensity of the solo.

6.3.3 mm. 151-159

During the last eight measures of the tenor solo (fig. 6.6, p. 108), dynamics are increased as the trumpets join in on the vamp an octave above the rest of the ensemble. Once again Margitza reflects this development. Often dynamics can be increased by going from a more complex texture to a simpler one. This is the case here, and while the ensemble moves from Piston's texture type III to texture type II, the tenor abandons the flow of sixteenth notes seen during the previous measures and begins a climb based partly on sixteenth notes and partly on a short rhythmic pattern repeated in measures 152-154, that continues until the very end of the solo where he ends on an A⁵. The apex of this section does actually not coincide with its climax. This is since the apex is found in measure 155 on a D⁶, but is hardly heard because of the strain with which it is played. The A⁵, however, sounds continuously from measure 155 until the end of the solo in measure 159 and adds intensity, not only because the note is so high, but because the sound of this register is so shrill, and it is possible to hear that holding that note demands a great amount of effort. It creates a tension that is finally released when the rest of the ensemble plays the final Em11 chord and the trumpets join in on the A⁵. The break right before this chord is also highly effective in creating extra momentum.

tenor solo

altos

tenor 1
bari

All tppts.

tbns.

gtr., pno. & bass

drums

tppts. 1, 2 & 3

Figure 6.5 mm. 143(2)-150(2). Tenor solo

The musical score is divided into two systems, each containing five staves. The first system is labeled with the following parts: tenor solo, altos, tenor 1, bari, tpnts., tbns., gtr., pno. & bass, and drums. The second system continues the same instrumentation. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The drums part includes a 'plays fill' instruction. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Figure 6.6. mm. 151-160

6.4 The Pretty Road

The Pretty Road has a solo section that is structured quite differently from the previous two examples mentioned. Dynamically speaking, there is a certain kind of linearity found in all of the solo sections in both *Wyrgly* and *Choro Dançado*, but in *The Pretty Road* only the first part of the flugelhorn solo (section II, mm. 87–185) can be said to possess this feature, despite the fact that there is a very sparse use of musical enhancements in this section. Schneider has earlier mentioned that this part of the solo represents the road to a destination (“the Pretty Road”) that is found in the second solo section of the piece. This first part has a strong sense of forward motion, while in the second part (section III, mm. 185–192) everything opens up and time just stands still. The role of the soloist also changes going from the first solo section to the next. Whereas the soloist clearly is the focal point in the first solo section, her role is not quite as clear-cut in the second part. In the following paragraphs I intend to give a few examples of how Schneider’s composition techniques help guide the soloist going in the direction Schneider desires for this piece.

6.4.1 Guiding the soloist using harmonic rhythm and modulation

In chapter 5 I spoke of how Schneider guides the soloist through the first solo section by using harmonic rhythm and modulation. I demonstrated how she creates modal planes in the beginning of the section, going back and forth between A Ionian and C Ionian and how the intensity gradually increases every time there is a change in key. The piece reaches its peak during measures 159–195 where the harmonic rhythm doubles and the modulations happen at a quicker pace. This increase in intensity is created in the ways the rhythm section and the soloist play.

The part of the solo going from measure 111 to measure 118 (fig. 6.7) is a good example of the calmer sections of Ingrid Jensen’s solo. The entire passage is quite soft and is played at a low dynamic level and the increase in intensity is subtle. These eight measures are repeated three times and she begins by playing slow, lyrical phrases in a low to mid-range on the flugelhorn (the first two repetitions). The flugelhorn is known for its soft and round timbre, something in which truly comes through in these passages. Jensen plays phrases mainly based on eighth notes both on- and off-beat, in addition to syncopated quarter notes. The attacks on the off-beat eighth notes are soft and airy. Looking at each of the individual phrases it is possible to detect that almost every one of them has an arch form, meaning that the higher

notes of the phrases generally are compensated for by a descending motion at the end of the phrase.

Rhythmically there is a development throughout these 24 measures by the fact that the syncopated quarter notes found in the first twelve bars of the solo disappear after that. Jensen continues to play eight notes for the next four bars. The third time measure 111 is played Jensen gives the music a slight lift as she reaches for the notes in the top range of the flugelhorn (C#⁶). This is compensated for, however, by a long line of eight notes going to the lower extreme of the instrument's range. The softness with which these top notes are played and the fact that they are followed by a descent makes sure that the dynamic increase is subtle. It is also the case that Jensen is playing diatonically to the key for the larger parts of this section. Chromaticism does not enter until towards the end of the section. The section is ended by a succession of sixteenth notes that spur off the following measures where sixteenth notes become a much more prominent feature, and the piece really begins to build.

The image shows a musical score for measures 111-118. It consists of three staves of music and a bass line with chords. The first staff is labeled 'm. 111 (1)' and the second 'm. 111 (2)'. The third staff is labeled 'm. 111 (3)'. The bass line shows chords: A7/C#, A7/D, A7/F#, E2/G#, A7/C#, D2, and E7sus. The music is in 4/4 time and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some syncopation in the first two measures.

Figure 6.7 mm. 111-118

6.4.2 Reaching for the top

The final part of section II is where the harmony begins to speed up. This is reflected by Jensen's almost constant stream of notes—mostly sixteenth notes—in this section (see fig. 6.8.). She often plays outside of the key during these measures, but occasionally makes motivic gestures that are inside the key, hence giving the flow of notes direction and purpose. It is also the case that she frequently plays very high notes, notes that are so high that you can hear the strain and effort made in hitting them. Some of these high notes are, in fact, not reached at all. This, however, only adds to the intensity of the section because it becomes a testament to the technical skills of the improviser. The avid listener will most likely not think of it as a missed note, but as a risk taken that was partly or maybe even completely, successful.



Figure 6.8. mm. 161-179

6.4.3 When time is taken out of the equation

The second solo section of *The Pretty Road* is very different from the first in that there is no sense of time, and that the sounds creating the musical enhancements can be described as a *tapestry of sound* (see chapter 2.3, p. 32). The function of the individual instruments, who is in front and who is further back in the mix, is unclear at best. I already mentioned how Schneider uses this section to paint a picture of sound representing her home town. The crisp quality of A Ionian and A Mixolydian contributes highly to this. Chapter 3 discussed how this section consists of a number of smaller motives and that the “Hopey-motif” was one of them (see p. 54). The seemingly open structure of this section opens up to a different kind of improvising than in the first part solo section. The role of the flugelhorn is not so much that of being in the foreground of the musical landscape, but rather being a reflection of what is going on in the band. The way in which Jensen echoes or bases her own lines on motifs occurring in the band, not only creates coherence because she comments on the “Hopey-motif” (thematic element), but it helps tie all the different pieces together by being a constant comment to what is happening. The fact that Jensen plays with different electronical devices, such as reverb, not only enforces this function, but also enhances the dwelling and outdoor-like quality of the section.

Below are two examples of how Schneider responds to the motifs played in the rest of the ensemble. In the first, she copies what Schneider calls “the crows” (fig. 6.10), and in the second, she echoes the “Hopey-motif” (fig. 6.9).



Figure 6.9 “Hopey-motif”



Figure 6.10 “the crows”

6.4.4 Concluding comments

The soloist has a very special place in Schneider’s compositions and can in many ways be seen as a storyteller. His first and foremost task is to contribute to the conveying of a certain character or feeling that Schneider wants to give across, and he is often involved in bringing a piece from one contrasting place to another. It is therefore of utmost importance that the soloist understands the intent of the piece and the direction in which it is moving. Schneider does this by providing musical enhancements that are highly instructional, both in creating forward motion, if that is to be desired, and in clearly conveying an atmosphere. The way in which the soloist responds to these guiding elements contributes a sense of spontaneity and life in addition to fulfilling Schneider’s wish that her music should feel collaborative. It should also be remembered that Schneider always communicates a great deal with her soloists in order to obtain an expression that is in keeping with her vision for the piece.

Conclusion

A year ago I was sitting in the office of one of my professors at the University of Minnesota, stressing over what pieces to analyze in my thesis. There is something of interest in each and every one of Schneider's compositions, and I have always been better at playing the Devil's advocate than actually making decisions. At some point during the conversation, my professor looked at me and said something like this: "Pick whatever you like, pick the ones you like the best. They're all gonna work for you." And that was true. I find that this says something about the consistency of quality in Schneider's work. I could have most likely picked any of her pieces and they would have provided me with good examples of how to successfully integrate improvisation into a larger musical structure. That makes me question, why is that?

During this thesis I have looked into several aspects of how Schneider creates coherence between the solo sections and the rest of the piece, and I find that the answer lies mainly in the fact that she always has a clear vision for her compositions. I mentioned in the introduction that Schneider does not write music for its own sake, but that she wants the music to be a conduit for something else, that it makes the listener experience something (Introduction, p.2). That means that she always has her mind focused at something beyond the music, beyond the black note heads in the score and beyond compositional technicalities.

Schneider's sense of focus, or vision seems to permeate everything she does musically. The soloist, for instance, has a narrative role in the ensemble. His task is to bring the piece from one point to another. A soloist with a big ego has no place in Schneider's orchestra. This does not mean that they are not allowed to shine, but it does mean that they always have to consider their own role in the larger context of the piece. Whatever they play must be in keeping with the direction in which the composition is headed.

In order for the soloist to be a part of the composer's vision, it is necessary that he is given some guidelines, and guiding the soloist through a solo section, is perhaps one of the things Schneider does best. Looking back at the pieces analyzed in this thesis it becomes evident that Schneider rarely writes anything without considering the ultimate goal for the piece. All of the solo sections I have taken a look at contain elements that are constructed to give as much information as possible about the character and the overall direction of the piece. This is true even in the parts of the solo where the soloist is accompanied only by the rhythm section playing on LIF 3. *The Pretty Road* gave an example of how Schneider uses harmony in order

to create forward motion in her music (chapter 5). Orchestration is another aspect that can give the improviser information about the character of a piece and the composer's vision. By changing modes, increasing the number of tension notes and creating different voicings, Schneider is able to convey a large range of different atmospheres in her pieces, which is vital in influencing the soloist's play. The use of different textures and timbres forming shifts in color can make a piece move forward or seem to be standing completely still. Lastly, Schneider uses thematic material in order to create inner coherence in her work so that the soloist can play relatively freely on top and still seem like an integrated part of the composition. What is interesting is that not only does Schneider compose economically throughout most of her work, she is also able to manipulate the thematic material in such a way that it serves her vision in the best possible manner and is able to structure the piece dynamically speaking. The solo sections in *Choro Dançado* are excellent examples of this.

During the process of finding a structure for this thesis, the LIF-model was born. Dividing the jazz orchestra into units based on how much individual freedom each player typically has at any given time, has proved fruitful in more ways than one. Firstly, it did help structure material consisting of a great range of interrelating aspects, and secondly it did emphasize how much of large ensemble music is actually improvised, how much information lies somewhere outside of the score. Lastly, it helps demonstrate, how much in control Schneider really is at any given time in the composition. She wants her music to be collaborative, and hence, part of her task as a composer is to give her musicians just enough information to carry the piece to her selected designation at the same time as she is giving them freedom enough to play with a certain sense of spontaneity. This is a fine balance, and the fact that her ensemble is one of the more stable large jazz ensembles that exists today, is a testament to her ability to successfully find that balance.

Working with this thesis has proved quite the challenge as there are so many elements that go into creating a structure which successfully integrates improvisation. Shedding light upon elements such as form, harmony and orchestration has meant that I have had to include several different analytical approaches to the material. This has partly meant that some of the areas visited in the thesis are perhaps not as in-depth as they could have been, but on the other hand, my aim was not only to investigate how Schneider integrates improvisation into her works, but also to subtract some general information as to how one can attempt to do the same in one's own work. I find that in this sense, I have learnt a great deal from the process of writing this thesis. When I sit down to arrange a piece of music now, I approach it very

differently than before, and it is my hope that an interested reader might have the same experience. I feel in general that when learning to compose and arrange there could be more emphasis on how to create a work that makes sense as a whole, how to start off with a clearly defined vision for a piece and how to execute it accordingly, that every element in an arrangement should have a purpose, a meaning. I think that this way of thinking could lead one to writing the kind of music where the soloist takes you on a journey to a different place.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK KIMBROUGH

Q.: How would you compare the act of improvisation in a big band versus a smaller group?

F.K.: Usually, improvisation in a conventional big band is more restricted – shorter solos perhaps, and adhering more to changes, form, etc. This of course depends on which big band or small group one may be playing with, and might not apply in the case of Gil Evans, Sun Ra, or contemporary groups such as John Hollenbeck's band, the ICP Orchestra, etc.

Q.: What is unique about The Maria Schneider Orchestra as opposed to other settings you have played in?

F.K.: I usually play with smaller groups that are by nature more improvisatory, or solo. Maria's music is another world altogether – much of the music is written out, but there are also passages that are very free.

Q.: How much freedom are you given by Schneider? Do you play a role in the shaping of the piece?

F.K.: Maria and I often meet as she's writing a piece – it helps me to understand her narrative, and to get an overview of the piece as it's being written, so that by the time we rehearse it (usually only once or twice before we premier it) I have a pretty good idea of how to approach it. I think each member of the band plays a role in shaping the piece – one personnel change, and everything is different. That's the beauty of it – the music is very precise, but also very open to interpretation. Sometimes it takes a while to figure out where you fit into the puzzle. We need to play the piece a few times, live with it, sometimes forget about it for a while and work on it subconsciously in our down time. The amount of freedom I have is dictated by the piece – sometimes my parts are completely written out, especially in some of her later works. Many of my parts double other instruments or sections, and that calls for very precise playing – I have to breathe with the instruments I'm doubling. Other parts (especially comping for solos) may be chord change-related. And then there are the pieces that call for me to play completely improvised (usually solos or transitions between parts of a suite). Also, after playing in the band for so many years (since 1993) there are parts that I play that are not written – things I hear to play to support or strengthen the ensemble; it could be doubling something that's happening in the horns, or something else.

Q.: You have played in the Maria Schneider Orchestra for a long time; do you feel Schneider has developed as a composer and arranger or that her way of writing has changed in any way? If that is the case, how?

F.K.: Though her writing has always had a distinct character, it's changed significantly since I joined the band. I think she's gone through several periods – arranging standards, and

composing more in a traditional big band context in the beginning – we still play an arrangement of “My Ideal” that she wrote in college, and it’s still beautiful and new each time we play it. I think that maybe “El Viento” is indicative of the beginning of a second period. That piece, and “Dissolution” take her writing to a new place – more through-composed, more written out – improvisation is still important, but it’s utilized in a different way – not “choruses”, but looser, with more of a narrative rather than just blowing over changes, though that can happen too.

Q: What kind of directions are you given in advance, and how do these affect you when you play? Do you prefer being given such instructions? Are they in fact necessary for the piece to work as a whole (due to the sometimes programmatic nature of Schneider’s music)?

F.K.: I appreciate the directions or suggestions given to me – it helps to know what she’s thinking about trying to accomplish with the piece. Sometimes it’s as simple as understanding a certain rhythmic concept, especially in some of her music inspired by Spanish, Brazilian or Peruvian music. There’s a new piece, “The Thompson Fields”, where I have a solo that’s completely improvised, and there’s a B major chord played by the trombones underneath me, but I’m supposed to avoid that tonality completely. After playing tonal music for 50 years, it’s a challenge to ignore tonality – I’ve taught myself all these years to build something on top of a tonality rather than ignore it. In this piece, the piano solo is another layer – there’s guitar in there too, to create yet another tonality, so that it’s bi or tri-tonal. It took me a little while to figure that one out, to find the space in the piece so that it doesn’t sound like a cluttered mess. After each of the first few performances, I’d ask, “am I getting close?” – At first the answer was usually “no”, but the more we played it, the closer I got to what she was hearing in her mind’s ear. After 18 months, I now know what direction to take. Patience is important.

Q: In what ways are you inspired by the original arrangement of a piece when improvising?

F.K.: When you’re improvising, hopefully it has something to do with the piece, otherwise I’m not so sure it makes much sense unless that’s the intention. So yes, the original arrangement of the piece should set the stage for all improvisation that takes place within the piece.

Q: Which Schneider piece is your favorite, and why. Both in terms of playing a solo and in terms of the whole arrangement.

F.K.: I love all of Maria’s pieces – they each have a distinct personality and achieve different musical goals. It’s difficult to name a particular favorite.

Q.: What function do you feel that Schneider’s background writing plays in the solo parts?

F.K.: Backgrounds provide an emotional lift, and also something to play with or against – ideas that can be elaborated on by the soloist, not just “pads” or sweetening.

Q.: How do you view your different roles in Schneider's music? (E.g. soloist, accompanist-both within the setting of rhythm section versus soloist and as part of a more densely orchestrated structure/tutti-parts).

F.K.: I view my role in the band as somewhat of an ambassador between the horns and the rhythm section. When I'm soloing, it's often solo piano, but there are places to play trio, or with backgrounds – each of these situations requires different skills – if it's solo piano, it's integrating that into the piece, musically and programmatically. I love accompanying the soloists in Maria's band – so many different points of view, stylistically and otherwise.

Q.: Do you approach playing Schneider's score differently from playing anyone else's music?

F.K.: I try to approach everyone's music differently, depending on what their musical desires are.

There is one additional topic I feel I should address here. One of the main reasons for Maria's success as a composer is the length of time most members of the band have been playing her music. I've been with her for nearly 20 years. Many of the horn players – Scott Robinson, Rich Perry, George Flynn, Keith O'Quinn, Laurie Frink, Tony Kadleck, Greg Gisbert, and Ben Monder have all been with her for that length of time or longer. Ingrid Jensen and Charlie Pillow have been in the band for at least 16 or 17 years. Jay Anderson appeared on her first recording, and came back to the band 10 years later. These are relationships of long standing, some going back to Maria's college days. I don't think this has happened since the Ellington/Basie days, when they kept some personnel for decades. Maria's generosity of spirit is what keeps the band together. There isn't enough work, as in the old days, to keep everyone employed full-time, but there's a tremendous loyalty and friendship in the band, and that's quite rare. Everyone loves Maria because of the care she takes both in creating the music and environments for it to be played, and for her exceptional love and care for the musicians involved in realizing it.

NB.: This interview was conducted per email due to Kimbrough's busy schedule.

INTERVIEW WITH MARIA SCHNEIDER TRANSCRIPTION

Q: What is your take/view on the role of improvisation in the kind of music that you write as opposed to more traditional forms of large ensemble jazz?

M.S.: My music is through composed. More traditional jazz is more theme and variation, so I try to give the soloist something where the soloist is almost telling a story, that they're really integrated (...) of the composition, they're not just playing everything that they can play and showing what a great soloist they are, but that they're trying to create something really dramatic and important to the meaning of the piece.

Q: What is important to you when picking the soloist(s) and the number of soloists for a piece? Do you write with a specific person in mind, a particular sound etc.? If yes, in what way?

M.S.: It is decided by the form of the piece. But, the form, the length, because I'm looking at it very compositionally. It's not just a decision. I'm not looking so much to say "O.K. I wanna feature this person and this person." I'm looking to write music, trying to be inspired by the musicians that play my music. I know them quite well at this point. I've worked with these guys for a long time. And so, I'll be hearing their sound and their approach to playing as I'm composing the piece. I'll just kind of hear their voice in my head. Harmonically and melodically and the timbre of their instrument. So I write for that almost automatically without thinking about it.

Q: How much freedom do you like to give your soloists? Do they get any specific instructions relating to the entirety of the music, or do they get free reign? / What role do the soloists have in the forming of your music?

M.S.: I have some pieces where the soloists have a lot of freedom like, for instance, I just wrote a piece where at the end of the piece the guitar player finishes the entire piece. Once he starts soloing, except for the rhythm section playing along with him, I don't compose anything at the end of the solo. I have to trust that he can end the piece. That is a huge responsibility to give away as a composer. Sometimes from week to week as we play something, the soloist and I will discuss what they're doing, and I might be hearing something a little bit more different, and I have to tell them. It's really difficult because you don't want somebody to take it personally. Because it's not necessarily, it's not anything about their skills or whatever. It's about having a vision for the piece. And sometimes, you know a soloist will approach something differently than I conceived, but I really love it. And I love it when the music can have different faces that can think of. So it's a balance between trying them to get what you're hearing in your head but also leaving yourself open to have them hear what's in their head, because in the end the reason I like writing for improvisers is because in the end the music is a collaboration. So it is very important to have people that are very musical. People that have technique but also have a lot of heart in their playing. And people that aren't playing egotistically. So many are just trying to show constantly everything that they can play and how amazing they are. That's not the kind of attitude I want in my music because I want

my music to feel collaborative, that they`re experience something as a soloist, unique when they play my music because I write intricately with something for them to respond to and react to. And for me, my music has openness in it so that my music can come alive and differences in time, and that`s what I love about writing for improvisers. It's the unknown factor. If I knew how everything should be, then I should just be composing unimprovised music. But there`s a balance there.

Q.: What are your main concerns when writing backgrounds? How do you judge what amount is right and what material to base them on?

M.S.: I remember the main thing when I was studying with Bob Brookmeyer is that he said that backgrounds shouldn`t be called backgrounds, but musical enhancements. It`s a really good idea because whatever you write, every moment that you put on paper should be contributing to the meaning or excitement or the story or the impact of that piece. And you know, so many people just write behind the soloist cause that`s kind of historically what you do when you have a soloist. This is not a good enough reason, you know, it should be something that helps the soloist go to where you want them to go or help to slowly guide the improvisation back into the written so that it feels integrated. That`s the main thing, I want a sense of flow, so I usually use the backgrounds as something to sort of bring the listener to not really be so aware of what`s improvised and what`s written. It kind of blurs the line between what is improvised and the written. Also it creates kind of a landscape for the soloist to play over. And sometimes it gives them something to react to. Sometimes it ends up being a kind of trading so that requires anything kind of response. Sometimes it`s just something that`s building the landscape up, something that`s bringing in certain motivic material so that the soloist gets guided to where you want them to go. It can be many different things. The point is that you as a composer has to know what the purpose of it is, and if the answer is, well it`s just backgrounds because that`s what you`re supposed to do. It`s just building a house, it`s a pre-found house. You just put up this wall, and this wall, you get to pick the color you know you... so it`s really important to know where you`re going.

Q.: Do you have any examples of pieces that inspired you when it comes to incorporating improvisation in your music? Or pieces of your own that you are particularly happy with in that respect? Why/in what ways?

M.S.: Specifically I was just always inspired by the music of Gil Evans just because of the orchestration, the lines. The first one of Giles that I really, really analyzed was "Miles Ahead". That`s when I realized how linear his music is, and that`s a big eye opening thing to do. I remember years ago when I was younger just loving the piece "Farewell and Goodbye" by Bob Brookmeyer. I loved the clusters, I loved the exuberance, I loved the joy of Thad Jones music. "Little Rascal on a Rock"—things like that. I can`t really say any one piece that I modeled something I wrote on. One piece of somebody. It has so many things, I have listened to a lot of classical music, and Brazilian music and flamenco music— a lot of different things. For my own music, pieces that I feel really close to—one would be *Hang gliding* because of that harmonic development in it, but the piece *Buleria*, the development of that piece. I felt like it really came to a place of motivic development in that piece. And also just kind of trying to really get powerful emotional impact. So those pieces would maybe be the two

pieces I feel the most strongly about. And then maybe *Cerulean Skies* from my last recording. Just because, I think with all of them, especially like with *Cerulean* and *Hang Gliding*. Mostly I felt that they achieved transmitting the feeling that I wanted to transmit. In the end to me, to me it's not about the music, it's about how well the music becomes the conduit for something else. To the listener, it almost doesn't matter what the music is, it's that the music feels like an experience. And I feel like *Hang Gliding* and *Cerulean Skies* got there for me. You know, closer than anything else, I'm not sure, but that's kind of most often what I'm going for.

DESCENDING LINES–A–MATERIAL

Thematic idea A1 (mm. 1-8)

a2) mm. 88-91 (E harmonic minor)

a3) mm. 92-95 E Phrygian major 3rd

a4) mm. 96-99 A Phrygian major 3rd

a5) mm. 104-107 D Phrygian major 3rd

a6) mm. 112-115 C phrygian major 3rd

Fm

